

The true Efficies of Me Tames Nastons

I: Chantry . Sculp .



The true Efficies of Me Tames Nastons

I: Chantry . Sculp .

17.513.44 Allary Alliker Her Bade God gin Hor grace Pheamin The Gift of
M Sam Savage
Merchant in Sondon
1766:

Twenty

SERMONS

Preached upon

Several TEXTS,

BY

That late Reverend, Pious, and Painful Preacher, Mr. James Nalton, Minister of St. Leonard Foster Lane, in the City of London.

Published for Publick good.

Say unto the Righteons, it shall be well with him; Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, Isa. 3. 10.

But if you will not bear, my Soul shall weep in secret for your Pride, Jer. 13. 17. He was a burning and a spining Light, John 5. 35.

LONDON.

Printed for Dorman Newman, at the Kings Arms in the Poultrey. 1677.

22 -1-

12.95.18.15

1766. 1766. LIBRARY Samuel Favage.



TO THE

Right Honourable and truly Religious Lady Mary Vere, Baroness of Tilbury; and to her vertuous Daughters, the Right Honourable Lady Fairfax, and the Honourable Lady Wolstenbolm.

My most Honoured Ladies,

May it please your Honours,

Hese Sermons, though
they have not the honour
of their Authors Pen, either in transcribing, or
in correcting of them; yet they
breathe so much of his Spirit, that
whosoever was not a stranger to his
Ministry, may easily perceive whose
A 2 la-

The Epistle

labours they are, without an Interpreter. They are now come forth, by the labour and diligence of them that priz'd his Person, and honour'd his Ministry; whereunto, although I was not in a Capacity of contributing any furtherance, yet I could not in Conscience let them pass into the World without doing this right to the Author, Publishers, and to the Papers themselves, as to give in my poor Testimony, That they are the genuine issue of him whose Name they bear; whereby, though dead, he yet speaketh. My humble Prayer to God shall be, That into what hand foever Providence may put them, the same Blesfing which accompanied the hearing of them, may go along with the reading of them also; for the rendring of them effectual to their spiritual and everlasting good.

As to my presumption in Dedica-

Dedicatory.

ting of them to Your Honours: I am not ignorant to how much censure I am liable in the Opinion of Standers-by; neither can I suffer more prejudice abroad, than I have suffered conflict in my own Spirit at home.

But the deserved Honour I bear to the Name of my Dear Husband (now with the Lord) and the deep sense of my Duty to Your Honours, hath prevailed against all discouragements.

May Your Honours be pleased to accept of this solemn acknowledgment of the various Obligations which your Ladiships have laid upon me, and to pardon this boldness, it shall not at all trouble me what censures others may pass upon me.

The Father of Mercies abundantly recompence all the kindness you have shewed to the Dead and to the Living; and may the Golden Oyl of Grace, which he hath abundantly

A 3

poured

The Epistle, &c.

poured out upon your Heads, descend upon all the Branches of Your Noble Families, and render them truly Honourable to many Generations. I cease further to trouble Your Honours, and humbly beg leave to subscribe my self, in all sincerity,

Your Honours most
Obliged Servant,

Mary Nalton.

TO THE

READER.

Lthough these Sermons, (besides the common inconvenience of being Posthumous works) had the unhappiness to want the Authors own polishing (for which cause it is but justice, that if any mistake should possibly be discerned in them, it may not be laid at the Authors door) yet I am informed they were taken by the Pen of a ready Writer, and a worthy friend of the Authors, as appears. And having perused most of them, I cannot deny them this just Testimony, That I find in them the

The Epistle

the Spirit and Lineaments of that worthy Person, whose name they bear; a Person, whose name needs no imbalming, having so many immortal Tombs in the hearts of those who were either eye or ear-witnefses of his great worthiness; especially in them, in whom he left fuch impressions of true Piety, as doubtless will abide with them for ever, and carry his bleffed memory into the other World. And amongst the rest of his Excellencies, this was not the least, that like precious Diamonds they were deep fet in a profound Humility and unexampled Modesty, whereby he ever was most contemptible in his own eyes: a great respeeer of any worth in his Brethren, but a great despiser and peremptory denier of it in himself (the only thing wherein he might be taxed for false and unjust dealing). And that which

to the Reader.

which concealed his Virtues, did. most higly commend them, whilst like the Sun breaking through a Cloud, it appeared more glorious, in spight of that Vail which his transcendent humbleness of mind threw upon it. I might fay much of his fervent Love and tender Compassion to the Souls of men, his forwardness to spend and to be spent for the good of his people (notwithstanding all the frowardness and unkindness of divers of them); his indefatigableness in serving the spiritual necessities of any who make known their desires to him; his great ingenuity and candour towards his Bre-What the Jesuit saith of thren. Bellarmine in his Life (how truly I know not, fince fesuits allow themselves the liberty of Equivocation) is much more true of him, that he was Candidus erga alios, severus erga seipsum,

The Epistle

ipsum, He was a most candid Interpreter of other mens actions, but ex-

cessively severe to himself.

But I must remember, I am not now writing a Panegyrick in praise of the Author, but a short introduation to a more profitable work: And therefore I shall conclude the Readers trouble with this only intimation; That the Subjects here treated of are practical and profitable: the manner of handling them plain and powerful, and fuch as, coming so evidently from the heart of the Speaker, are most likely to make impression upon the heart of the Reader: and the time (I am fure) is not unseasonable, seeing the Reverend Author is gone to the place of silence, whence you will hear him no more.

The Lord who was pleased often to accompany his Word when it was

to the Reader.

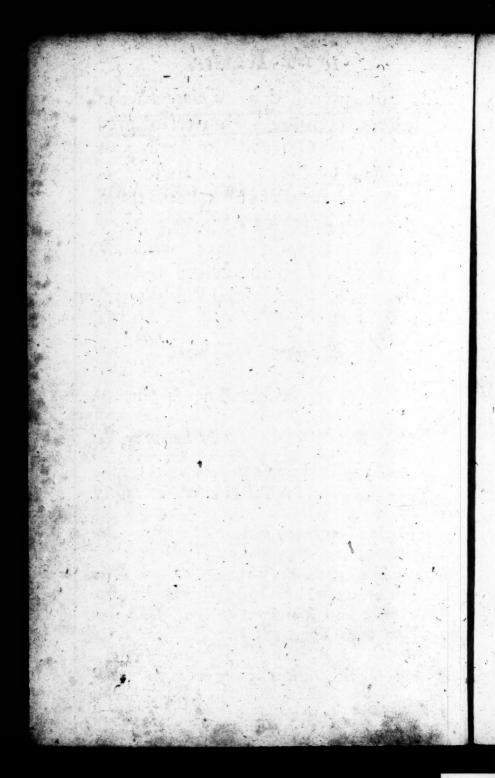
by him preached viva voce to the Hearers, continue the powerful prefence of his Grace in the reading of it. And let such as read these Sermons, get another Edition of them Printed in their hearts, so as they may be read in their lives, whereby they will answer the design and design of the Preacher and Publishers.

Thy Servant in the work

of the Ministry, so far

as he may,

MATTHEW POOL.



The Texts of the following SERMONS.

Ans Petition, and Gods Compassion, shewed on Psalm
138. 3, In the day that I
cryed unto thee, thou answeredst me, and strengthened me with strength in my soul. Pag. I

Light discovered, and man recovered, on 2 Tim. 1. 10, — And hath brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel.

p. 27

Christs Provision, for mans Direction, on Isa. 40.11, He shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd, he shall gather his Lambs in his Arms, and carry them in his Bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with Young.

p. 48

Walking in Christ a sign of our right receiv-

Texts of the following Sermons.

ing of Christ, on Col. 2.6, As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

p. 94

tion, on Heb. 2, and last verse: For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

p. 116

it, on Heb. 4. 1, Let us therefore fear, lest a Promise being lest us of entring into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

p. 139

The persevering Saint shall be the Crowned Saint, on Rev. 3. 11, Behold, I come quickly; hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy Crown. p. 185

Mercy despised, and God provoked thereby, on Psal. 106. 24, Yea, They despised the pleasant Land, and believed not his Word.

p. 218

christs Preciousness, on 1 Pet. 2:7, Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious.

p. 269
The

Texts of the following Sermons.

The Necessity of Humiliation, on Acts 16. 29,30, Then he called for a Light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, &c. p. 330

christ the Bread of Life, on John 6.35, I am the Bread of Lite, &c. p. 360

Christs true Disciples, Doers of Gods Will, &c. on John 7. 17, If any man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self. p. 383

These two Books of Mr. Tho. Brooks, are lately Printed for, and to be sold by Dorman Newman, at the Kings Arms in the Poultrey.

A Golden Key to open hidden Treasures: or several great Points which refer to the Saints Blessedness, and their future Happiness: with the Resolution of several important Questions, &c.

Paradise opened: or the Secret Mysteries, and Rarities of Divine Love, of infinite Wisdom, and of Wonderful Counsel, laid open for Publick View: Also the Govenant of Grace, and the high and glorious Transactions of the Father and the Son in the Covenant of Redemption: Opened and improved at large, &c.

Believers Mortification of fin by the Spirit, or Gospel-Holiness advanced by the Power of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of the Faithful: Whereunto is added the Authors three last Sermons on Gen. 3. 5. By the Learned and Pious Mr. Alexander Carmichael, formerly of Scotland, and late Preacher of the Gospel in London: Published by his own Copy.

The Crown and Glory of a Christian, consisting of a found Conversion, and a Well-ordered Conversion.

Mr. Wadsworth's Legacy: being his serious Exhortation to a Holy Life. Also his Funeral Sermon, Sayings, and Elogy.

MANS PETITION,

AND

GODS COMPASSION.

A SERMON Preach'd

Septemb. 6. 1657.

Pfalm CXXXVIII. 3. 1

In the day when I cryed, thou answeredst me; and strengthened me with strength in my soul.

His Pfalm, for the kind of it, is Eucharistical, a Thanksgiving-Pfalm.
The occasion of penning this Pfalm in the judgment of Interpreters was this, Davids establishment in the Kingdom, after that he had

been hunted like a Partridg upon the Mountains, driven from his own Country, and banished into a Wilderness, and pursued like a Traitor; when after all these dangers, and sears, and snares, and opposition that he met with from Saul, and from

his bloody and implacable enemies, God had now feeled him in the Kingdom, & brought his hope into his hand, and had lifted up his head above his adverfaries, and had trodden his enemies under his feet: now what he had won by prayer, he wears with thankfulness, I will praife thee (fays he in the foregoing verses) with my whole heart: I will wor ship towards thy holy Temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness, and for thy truth: (for thy lovingkindness in promising, and for thy truth in performing) for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. In the 2d verle, it is a dark sentence at the first view; but as a judicious Expositor upon the place well observes, the words may be thus read, and will better agree with the Hebrew, Thou hast magnified thy name above all things in thy word: that is, in fulfilling thy word: thou haft magnified thy name above all things, in that thou haft fulfilled thy word; what thou freely promifedft, thou hast faithfully performed; what thou halt spoken with thy mouth, thou hast fulfilled with thy hand; for which thy name is wonderfully to be magnified. The name of God is that whereby God is known: thy name is wonderfully magnified in fulfilling thy word; nay, thy name is magnified above all things, that is the meaning of the phrase. For the proof and evidence of this truth, That God is wonderfully to be magnified for fulfilling his promife, for making good his word to his Servant : for the proof of this, David brings in his own experience to fet feal thereto in the words of the Text, for, fays he, In the day when I cryed to thee, thou answereds me, and strengthenedst. me with frength in my foul. So then in this verle you may take notice of these two particulars: First You have Gods free favour and gracious

dealing

dealing with David in the day of his fears, and of his straits, in these words, In the day when Icry-

ed, thou answeredst me.

Secondly, You have the evidence or proof of this free favour of God towards him, in an experience that he had of it; for fays he, Thon strengtheneds me with strength in my foul: and accordingly there are these two points of doctrine that may be fairly deduced from this Text.

Doct. 1. That the Lord is ready to answer the Prayers of his poor servants when they cry unto him.

Doct. 2. It is one gracious way of answering our Prayers, when God does strengthen us with spiritual strength, when he gives us strength in our souls.

I begin with the first.

e

y

3

The Lord is very ready to hear and answer the prayers of his poor servants when they cry unto him. For the proof of this point, I could bring you a whole cloud of witnesses out of the book of God: but I will content my felf with three or four: That in the 107 Pfalm, Then they cryed unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses: and it is four times repeated in that one Plalm, for the confirmation of our faith, because we are so backward to believe the truth of it: and he gives four inflances of men that were brought into great straits, and still when they cryed unto the Lord, the Lord delivered them out of their distresses: and remarkable is that Scripture, Isa. 30. 19, For the people shall dwell in Zion, at Jerutalem thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry: when he shall hear it be shall answer thee: Mark, he will be very gracious to thee at the voice of thy cry: you shall see the experience of it in two of Gods Saints and

Servants, that had tasted of Gods goodness in this particular, and have set it down for our encouragement: one was the Prophet Jeremy in the Dungeon, Lam. 3.55,56, I called upon thy name, O Lord: out of the low Dungeon thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry: God had an ear for his very breathing. The other example is that of the Prophet Jonah in the Whales belly, in that remarkable place, Jonah 2. 2, Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fishes belly, and said, I cryed by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me: out of the belly of hell cryed I, and thou heardst my voice. If you would know a reason why God is thus ready to hear and answer the prayers of his Servants when they cry, take these three or four reasons briefly.

First, Because of Gods saithfulness: He is very saithful that hath promised: Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will hear and answer, and thou shate glorisie me, Psal. 50. 15. So in Isa. 65.24, And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer: and whiles they are yet speaking, I will hear. God is saithful to his promises, All his promises in Jesus Christ are yea, and in him they are amen. Our unsaithfulness cannot make him unsaithful: if we believe not, he remains saithful, he cannot deny him-

felf.

Secondly, God hears his Servants prayers, Because of that compassion that is in him towards them; as he is very faithful, so he is very pitisul: as he hath beams of Majesty, so hath he also bowels of mercy; and his bowels yearn towards his poor children when they cry to him: Can a mother forget her sucking-child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget,

yet will I not forget thee, Isa. 49. 15. A tender-hearted mother, it she hear her little child whimper in the cradle, that does not move her; but if the child cry to purpose, then her bowels yearn towards it: she can stay no longer from it, but runs in all haste to it: so here, when we do but whimper, pray coldly, God may be, is not ready to hear; but if we cry in prayer, if we follow God with our supplications, then his bowels cannot but yearn towards us.

Third reason, Because Gods servants have Jesus Christ to pray for them: We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: he is pleading our cause, I John 2. I. And he ever lives to make intercession for us, Heb. 7.25. Nay, his very presence with the Father, is our intercession: he appears in the presence of God for us: he appears as our advocate, in our stead, for our good, Heb. 9.24. For Christ is not entred into the holy places made with hands, which are the sigures of the true: but into heaven it self, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

The fourth reason is this, Because the servants of God have not only Christ to pray for them, but they have the Spirit of Christ to pray in them, Rom. 8.26. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our insirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the spirit it self maketh intercession for us, with groans which cannot be uttered. If you ask me, But how does the spirit of God help our insirmities?

I answer, These four or five ways.

First, The spirit of God helps our infirmities, by affecting us with them, with our wants and weak-nesses; that being humbled and lying low at the feet of God, we may be vessels more capable of mercy.

God will not pour in the oyl of his mercy, but into the vessels of a broken heart; now the spirit of God by a sight and sense of our manifold infirmities, doth empty us, and work in us some kind of brokenness of heart, and so sits us for mercy.

Secondly, Again, the spirit of God helps our infirmities likewise, by acting his own graces in us, by acting those beginnings of faith, and love, and humility, and self-denial, which he himself hath

wrought in us.

Thirdly, By stirring up in us holy motions, holy defires, and pantings, and breathings after our heavenly Father, even such breathings as these, Pfal. 42. 1, 2. As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God: my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? when wilt thou come to me? when shall I come to thee? And, my soul followeth hard after God.

Fourthly, The spirit of God helps our infirmimities, by working in us a childlike-boldness, enabling us to cry Abba Father: we can come to God as a child to a Father; Father, I want this, I want that: God is delighted to hear the moan-makings

of his poor children.

Fifthly, By restraining Satan, that he may not interrupt us and distract us in holy services; for this is certain, we seldom go to duty, but Satan still stands at our right-hand: When Joshua the high Priest stood before the Angel of the Lord, Satan stood at his right-hand to resist him, Zach. 3. 2. But now, Jesus Christ he is stronger than Satan, and he by his spirit does rebuke him. But there is one great objection I know will be ready to arise in every one of your hearts: You say, God is ready to hear and answer

answer the prayers of his poor servants when they cry to him; but some will fay, Experience seems to deny this: Gods own fervants pray oft, and yet they have no answer; nay, God is sometimes angry with the prayers of his fervants, Pfat.80.4, O Lord God of Hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people? the prophet Feremy. he professes he cryed to God and shouted, and yet God shut out his prayers, and wrapt himself in a cloud, that his prayers should not pass through, Lam. 3. 44, Thou hast covered thy self with a cloud, that our prayers should not pass through. It may be fome will fay, I have been praying for fuch a grace twenty, thirty years together, and yet have not got it; for strength against such a corruption, and yet have not got it. For answer to this objection you must know,

First, Gods people sometimes pray not when

they feem to pray.

Secondly, God hears his people, when some-

times he feems not to hear.

First, Gods people pray not when they seem to pray, as when they pray coldly and careless, this is as no prayer; as the Apostle said in the like case, When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lords Supper, 1 Cor. 11, 20, as if he should say, irregular, unprepared receiving, is not receiving at all: as good never a whit, as never the better; so here, cold, careless, formal, customary prayer, is as no prayer, Dan. 9.13. All this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that me might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth; for these seventy years hath thine hand been heavy upon us, yet we have not made our prayers before the Lord B

our God: we made a shew of praying, but our careless praying may be said to be no praying.

Again, Gods people in praying may be faid not to pray at all, when they exercise only gifts in prayer, and have not the grace of prayer: for you must know, the power and prevalency of prayer doth not confift in the neatness of the phrase, nor in the redundancy of rhetorick, nor in curious oratory; it consists not in outward expressions; but it consists in the humility of a spirit wounded, and looking up to God; it confifts in this, God looks at this, the frame of the spirit, not at the outward expressions in prayer: a man may by the strength of parts have an excellent gift in prayer, and yet not the grace thereof: If you ask me, How may a man know the difference between the gift of prayer, and the grace of prayer? I answer (briefly), you may know it by these particulars.

First, The gift of prayer vents it self in publick more than in private; but now the grace of prayer vents it self more in private than in publick: it will enable a man in his private closet, to pour out his soul before God, when there is no witness but his

heavenly Father and his own conscience.

Secondly, You shall observe the gift of prayer puffs a man up with pride; but now the grace of prayer makes a man very lowly and base in his own eyes; the more grace a man hath in his heart, the more base he will be in his own account, even in his greatest enlargements.

Thirdly, The gift of prayer makes a man pray in the strength of his parts; but now the grace of prayer makes a man pray in the strength of Jesus

Christ.

Fourthly, The gift of prayer expects an eccho

of commendation from men; but now the grace of prayer that expects only an approbation from God.

Fifthly, The gift of prayer vents it felf in outward expressions: but the grace of prayer consists in the inward impressions upon the heart, not the

outward expressions of the mouth.

Sixthly, The gift of prayer will quiet the heart for the present, but it doth not purifie the heart: it will quiet the heart, it will stop the mouth of a chiding conscience, which otherwise would be rating at us: if a man neglect prayer as a gift, his conscience will be unquiet; but now the grace of prayer will not only quiet, but purifie the conscience.

The fecond part of the answer to the objection is this: The objection was this: Experience seems to deny this truth, that God is ready to hear and answer the prayers of his people. I have a second answer, and that is this: God may be said to hear and answer the prayers of his people when he seems not to hear: as we may seem to pray, when we do not pray; so God may be said to hear, when he

feems not to hear: for example,

First, God seems not to hear when he hears, when he puts our prayers into his book, and our tears into his bottle; when he hath a book of remembrance for our prayers, when our prayers are upon the file, though for the present we do not see them answered, Acts 10. 4. God speaks to Cornelius there, Thy prayers and alms are come up for a memorial before me: Cornelius was ready to think, I have prayed thus long, I have lost all my labour, I see no fruit, no benefit of them; but saith God to him, Thy prayers are in remembrance, they are upon the file for all that.

Second-

Secondly, God hears when he feems not to hear; namely, when he is fitting us for the mercy he intends to bestow upon us: God makes his people wait for a mercy, as appears out of those words, Ifa. 8. 17, I will wait upon the Lord that hideth away his face from the house of Jacob, and will look up: And God fays, that he will wait that he may be gracious, Isa. 30. 18. God waits opportunities to bestow mercies when they are most seasonable, when his people are fitted for mercy. A man that is about to pour in some precious oyl into a glass, if he see some dirt at the bottom of the glass, he stops his hand for the present, says he, Let the glass be washt first, then I will pour in the oyl: so if our hearts be once washt and fit ro receive the mercy we beg, then God will bestow it, Fer. 4. 14, Oh Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayst be saved: when we wash away our fins by repentance, and are fit for mercy, then God beflows it on us; in the mean time he hears, though he feems not to hear.

Thirdly, God hears when he seems not to hear: when he hears according to our wants though not according to our wills: when he bestows upon us that which is better than that we pray for, Psalm 34. 10, The greedy Lions shall lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord, shall not want any good thing: if it be good for them, they shall not want it: if peace and plenty, and prosperity were good for them, they shall not want it, but God would bestow it upon them: but if they would abuse their peace, and plenty, and prosperity, to pride and presumption, then the denial of them would be a great mercy: God sometimes denies that in mercy to his children, which he grants in anger

anger to wicked and ungodly men: it is better a thousand times to be under the frowns of Gods fayour, than under the imiles of his vengeance; it is better to weep with Christ, than sport with Satan : its better to be a corrected child, than a cockered baltard; If we want chaftisement, whereof all are partakers, then are we bastards and not sons, Heb. 12. 8. its better to be chastised of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world, than spared with the world and condemned to all eternity. A man at the first view would wonder at Gods dealing with Paul, and his dealing with Satan; Satan begged that he might have liberty to tempt Job: God answered Satan, and gives him leave, Job 1, Go thy way and tempt him. Paul on the other fide, he earneitly begged to be free from the buffetings of Satan, he begged thrice that God would remove the thorn in the flesh : and this was all the answer he could have for the present, 2 Cor. 12, My grace is sufficient for thee: Why, may some say, doth God answer Satan in his request about Jobs sufferings, and not Paul in his request about the Devils buffeting him? why was God more ready to gratify Satan in his request, than Paul in his, who was a chosen vessel? A man would wonder at this; but if you observe it well, Paul was heard in that he was not heard, and the Devil was not heard in that he was heard,

First, Paul was heard in that he was not heard: for he was heard to his advantage, though he was not heard in the letter of his request: he beg'd that the thorn in the flesh might be removed: God's answer was, My grace is sufficient for thee: God in giving him supporting grace under the temptation, gave a fitter mercy for Paul than the removal of the

temptation; because God saw that Paul by reason of the multitude of his Revelations, had need to be kept humble; therefore my supporting-grace is better for thee, than the deliverance thou beggest. Paul was heard in that he was not heard: though he was not heard in the letter of his request, yet he was

heard for the better, for his advantage.

On the contrary; The Devil was not heard in that he was heard: he beg'd liberty to tempt Job, God gave him leave, Job 1, Lo, he is in thy hand, all he hath is in thy power; but what did the Devil get by it? he was baffled, and fool'd, and prov'd a lyar to his face; for Job, notwithstanding all the losses upon his estate, kept his integrity, and sinned not; but saith the Devil, Put forth thine hand and touch his bone and his slesh, and he will curse thee to thy face: and the Lord said, Lo, he is in thy hand, but save his life: then the Devil used all his art he could to make him blaspheme God, but he could not prevail; so the Devil was proved a lyar to his face.

Now the use I shall make is this, This dostrine may be like Auron and Hur to hold up Moses hands it is a great encouragement to every one of us to pray still, to seek the face of God still; though he seem to delay us, or deny our importunities, or to turn from us; yet follow God still: though he seem to deny our prayers, yet give not over praying: for you see God will at one time or other, in one kind or other, answer all the prayers that are put up to him: In the day when I cryed, thou answereds me. Let me tell you, We shall never have cause to repent of our praying: could we pray an hundred times more than we do, we should never have cause to repent of our praying, except it be for this, That we have prayed no more frequently and servently.

And

And so much for the first point of doctrine.

The second point of doctrine is this, It is one gracious way of answering our prayers, when God doth bestow upon us some spiritual strength: When he bestows strength in our souls, that is one way of Gods answering our prayers graciously; if he do not give the thing we desire, yet if he gives us strength in our souls, he graciously answers our prayers. For the better clearing of this point it may be demanded, What is this spiritual strength? I answer, it is a work of the spirit of God, enabling a man to do and suffer what God would have him,

without fainting or backfliding.

I call it a work of the spirit of God, because indeed it is the spirit of God that does corroborate and strengthen the soul: Eph. 3. 16, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man. Alas, we of our selves, if we have not the spirit of God to help us, are as weak as water; we are no more able to stand in a day of trial, or withstand any temptation, than a little child is able to withstand a giant; but now when Sampson was cloathed with the spirit, then he could grapple with a Lion; so when once we are cloathed with the spirit of God, we shall be able to encounter with Lion-like corruptions and temptations.

Secondly, Whereby a man is able to do and suffer what God would have him to do and suffer: there is strength, considerable strength required in doing the will of God, Joshua 1.7, Only be thou strong and very couragious, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the Law which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right-hand, or the left, that thou mayest prosper whither soever

thou goest; but there is a great deal more strength required in suffering. Paul had attained a great deal of strength, when he said, For the Lord Christ bis sake I have suffered the loss of all things, Phil. 3.8.

Thirdly, I say, whereby a man is enabled to do and suffer what God requires without fainting, and backsliding: there is strength required in doing the will of God, but there is much strength required in suffering; I, but yet more strength is required in perseverance; for if we faint in the day of adversity, our strength is but small, Prov. 24. 10 and therefore says the Apostle, We must often look upon Jesus Christ the author and sinisher of our faith; and consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, less we be weary & faint in our minds, Heb. 12.3.

Secondly, It may be demanded, how doth God ftrengthen a man with ftrength in his foul? I an-

fwer, these three ways:

First, God strengthens a Christian with spiritual strengths, when he doth comfort him in the assurance of his love shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost; Oh, this will enable a man to bear any burthen! Smite Lord (will such a one say) I will bear any thing willingly; because my sins are for-

given.

Secondly, God strengthens us with strength in our souls, by encouraging us in our sufferings, by cheering up our hearts with some inward cordial. Look how God cheer'd up Saint Paul when he was in danger, when forty men swore his death, in Acts 23. 11, And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified for me in Hierusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. So when God comes and cheers up the heart, and brings some of his best cordi-

1

cordials in our worst fainting sits: when in our strongest afflictions he brings in his sweetest consolations: when we are able to say with David, Pfal. 94. 19, In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my soul: when God brings in his divine comforts, then he strengthens us with strength in our souls. As I remember when Philip Landsgrave, being long prisoner under Charles the sifth, being demanded what cheered him up in that condition; made this answer, I feel, says he, the divine comforts of the martyrs. God hath divine comforts for his people in their fainting sits: as their afflictions abound: so he makes his comforts to abound.

Thirdly, God strengthens with strength in the foul, when he does support and keep up the spirit from finking: fays David in Pfalm 94. 17, 18, Unless the Lord had been my helper, my soul had almost dwelt in silence: but when I said, my foot slipped, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. That is an excellent Scripture, Ifa. 41. 10, Fear thou not, for I am with thee : be not dismayed for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold shee with the right hand of my righteousness. And obferve, when God does support a man, though the affliction be never to heavy; yet it shall not fink him, but he shall be able to stand under it : see it in David, 1 Sam. 30. 4, when he was at Ziglag, when there was fuch a load of afflictions upon him, he wept that he could weep no longer: his own foldiers mutinied, his wives were taken and carried captive, yet God supported him in that great distress. the contrary, under less temptations and troubles, if God do not support a man, he will fall; see it in Ahirophel; because his counsel was not accepted, God not supporting him under this light trouble, he goes and hangs himfelf.

For the use of this: If this be one way of Gods hearing our prayers, when he strengthens us with strength in our souls; Then call your selves to an account, whether God hath strengthned your souls yea or no: here is divers of you that have been made partakers of a strengthening Ordinance this day, namely, the Lords Supper, which the Lord Jesus hath appointed for your spiritual confirmation and corroboration. Now will it not nearly concern you to ask your own souls this question, Hath God strengthened you with strength in your souls? It may be you will say to me, how shall we do to know it? Answer me but these four or five questions, and you may know it.

First, tell me, What are you in the time of troubles and temptations? for what a man is in tryals, that is the man: Can you live in a time of straits, fears, doubts and dangers? as the strength of a ship is tryed in the time of a storm; if she can live in a storm, then you may say she is a strong ship: the strength of a Castle, is tryed in the time of battel; if it can endure the roaring Cannon, then its a strong Castle: now if you can keep your standing in a time of danger, this argues you have received

spiritual strength in your fouls.

Secondly, Can you bear variety of conditions without fainting? can you pass through good report and ill report, through honour and dishonour, through a prosperous estate and decayed estate? can you pass through these with an equal temper and frame of spirit? as you are not pust up with prosperity, so you are not too much cast down with adversity. Saint Paul had this strength, I have learnt, saith he, in what estate soever I am, therewith to be content.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Can you cleave close to Jesus Christ without weariness constantly? if you be off and on, if your way be uneven, it's a token you have

little strength.

Fourthly, Are you able to do duties in a fpiritual manner? the spiritual performance of holy duties, argues the receiving of some spiritual strength. By these and the like questions you may know, whether you have received some of this spi-

ritual strength, yea or no.

A fecond use I shall make, it is by way of Exhortation: Oh labour to read this Text experimentally: read it, I say, so as your own hearts may make a commentary on it: Oh Lord, thou hast answered me; Lord, I can speak by experience: I was as weak as water, but thou hast strengthened me with strength in my soul: Whatever was written aforetime, was written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope. This instance of David was written for your imitation and consolation. O labour for this spiritual strength. To press you to attain it, I shall use but this one motive:

Consider the great need you have of this spiritual strength at all times, but especially in times of general sears and dangers, then you have special need of it: In what regard, may be you will say, do we need so much strength in our souls? I will tell you in these sour respects especially, or on this

fourfold account:

First, In regard of Duties that are to be performed.

Secondly, In regard of Afflictions that are to be endured.

Thirdly, In regard of the Enemies that are to be encountered.

Fourthly, In regard of the danger of Apoftacy

that is to be prevented.

First, You have great need of this spiritual strength in regard of the Duties that are to be performed: Oh, a Christian hath much work lying upon his hands in reference to eternity! a great work it is to provide oyl in your Lamps, grace in your hearts; a great work it is to get the hazzard of eternity over, to get an interest in Jesus Christ, and to get an assurance of that interest. A great work it is for you to make your calling and election fure, fure to your own fouls; to be working out your Salvation with fear and trembling; a great work it is for you to be pondering the paths of your feet, to keep your hearts above all keepings; to be building up your selves in your most holy faith: These are very great works. It is the language of the Apostle Saint Jude, ver fe 20 of his Epistle: But ye beloved, building up your selves in your most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost; and to be pressing forward towards the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, Phil. 3.14. Nay, a Christian hath yet a harder work than this to do: for a Christian is to do that work that croffes his own carnal and corrupt will. There are some difficult duties of Christianity that are to be performed, as denying of our felves, a hard duty; the croffing of our carnal and corrupt Affections, a hard duty; the mortifying of a beloved Luft, a very hard duty; the plucking out of a right eye: the cutting off of a right hand: a parting with a fin that is as dear as our right hand, and our right eye, a difficult duty; fo for a man to be crucifying the flesh with the Affe-Aions and Lusts thereof, to be contemning the world: to trample upon the pleasures, the flatteries,

E

f

it

fo

n

h

g

re

at

h

y da

fti

ries, the blandishments of it; for a man to love his enemies, to pray for them that perfecute him, to do good to them that despitefully use him; How is it possible for a man to do all this work, a difficult work, this work which fo much croffes his own carnal and corrupt frame, if he have not a considerable portion of spiritual strength? A weak Christian, alas, is offended with every thing; he is ready to stumble at every straw : every duty is a burthen to him, every command of Christ seems grievous to him, every yoke of Christ he is not able to take upon his neck: it may be he may have fome flashes of good desires now and then, as Baalam had, Oh that I might die the death of the righteous: It may be he may have some good purposes and refolutions, as Saul had, I Sam. 26. 21, Return my son David, for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this days But all his purposes came to nothing. Nay, may be fometimes he may have fome endeavours, faint feeble endeavours, in the way of grace, just like the third ground in the Parable which wanted root; it brought forth indeed a blade, but it brought forth (the Text fays) nothing to perfection. If a man be a weak Christian, alas, it is very little that he can do in the business of Eternity. You have great need of itrength therefore in this regard.

Secondly, You have great need of strength in regard of the Afflictions, Temptations, Troubles, and Tryals that are to be endured. You have often heard, (and you will know it at one time or other; you will not believe us, but you will believe one day your own experience) That through many Afflictions you must enter into the kingdom of God. And 2 Tim. 3. 12, Tea, and all that will live godly

in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. They must look for perfecution in one kind or other: And in the world you shall have tribulation, faith our Saviour: You must look for it, says he, if you be my disciples, John 16. 33. And fays Luther, If thou beeft not a Cross-bearing Christian, thou art no Christian indeed: How is it possible now for a man to climb this rocky way, if he hath not strength? for the way to Heaven, is like the way that Jonathan and his Armour-bearer had, in climbing up a great Rock: a sharp rock was on the one side, and a sharp rock was on the other side, I Sam. 14. 4. How is it possible for a man to climb up this rocky way, if he have not some considerable strength? If Stephen, for example, had not had a great measure of strength, how could he have lookt upon his pero fecutors fo chearfully in the midft of all their threatnings, when they were ready to stone him? yet then they beheld his face, as if it had been the face of an Angel, Acts 6. 15. And if Saint Paul had not had considerable strength, how could he have have said, True, the holy Ghost witnesseth that bonds and afflictions wait for me in every place, in every City where ever I go: but none of these things move me: neither count I my life dear unto my self, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testifie the Gospel of the grace of God, Acts 20. 23, 24. What a gallant answer was that which one made to Valentinian the Arrian Emperour, that threatned him with Bonds, Imprisonment, Banishment, and death? Tush, fays he, Let him scare children with such. Bug-bears as these, he cannot scare me with them: he may take away my life, but he cannot take away my love to the truth; Here was a strong Christian. Now

Now, I fay, if a man have not a considerable strength, how can he be able to bear all the afflictions that he may meet with? Can you drink of the cup (says our Saviour) that I shall drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? Matth. 20. 22. He speaks there of the baptism of blood: Can you be baptized with this bloody baptism? can you be content to suffer for

my fake?

n

u :- 0?

Pd

.

y

e

t

d

5

y

I

y

e

0

f

d

b

y

Thirdly, You have need of a great deal of strength in your fouls, in regard of the enemies that are to be encountred with: spiritual enemies, dangerous enemies, deadly implacable enemies. For example now: One of the greatest Enemies you have to encounter with, is an invifible enemy, namely, that Judas which you and I have in our hearts, the curfed corruption in our Natures, that works us more mischief than either the World or the Devil: nay, then all the Devils in Hell can do. You fee the whole world in a manner is subdued by this cursed enemy called Sin: whole World almost is brought into bondage to it: and it is an enemy that you and I can never be rid of, until our bodies drop down into the dust.

Then you have a flattering and bewitching World, and the lusts and pleasures of it are its baits: those baits and allurements of it do so Lime-twigg the soul, it is not able to mount up: oh, how many are bewitched by it to their own destruction! Demas hath for saken me, having loved this present World: and he loves it, because it is present What is the reason of all the Apostacy, and Back-sliding, and falling from the Profession, and Principles, and Practice of Godliness, but only

the love of this present world : Men love the world because it is present: they preser a present possesfion, before a future expectation: Christs promife is for the future, You shall be happy hereafter: but fay they, the world pays down upon the nail: You shall have it in hand, not in hope, fays the world; If you can but lye, fwear, and cog, and flatter, and temporize, and turn with every wind, faith the world, you shall have this preferment. Now this is that which takes with many men: the World is fuch an enemy, while it kiffes, it kills: the World, like Dalilah, while it dandles you upon its lap, it betrays you to Satan. How many are there at this day, that will facrifice the peace of a good conscience? they will forfake, and lofe God and Christ, and heaven, and happiness, and all, rather than they will part with their present enjoyments? Oh, that fuch would confider the pleasures of sin are but for a feafon, but the punishments for sin are for ever.

Again, You have Satan to encounter with, who is an implacable enemy, a roaring Lion, that walks about feeking whom he may devour: and the dint of all his malice is against those that desire to walk most strictly, most uprightly before God: for the greater part of the world, I mean them that are unregenerate, those that are rockt asseep in the Cradle of security, he never troubles them. When the strong man armed keeps his Palace, all his goods are in peace. Satan never molests them: these are his own houshold, under his own power: but the dint of all his malice is against those that have given up their names to Jesus Christ; and the more holy and heavenly-minded, and unblameable you desire to be in your Conversations, the greater

will be his rage and enmity against you.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Another Enemy you have to encounter with, and that is Death, the last enemy that shall be destroyed, which is called the King of fears, and the fear of Kings: of all terribles the most terrible, as the Philosopher calls it. Now you have all these enemies to conquer: and how can you look the King of terrors in the face, if you have

not this spiritual strength?

d

f-

ſe

ut

u

id id

ne

is

is

d,

is

i-

t,

y

at

r

0

25

ıt

k

r

t

e

n

e

e

u

,

Fifthly, You have need of a great deal of strength, in regard of the danger of Apostacy that must be prevented: Oh great, exceeding great, greater than I am able to tell you, is the danger of Apoftacy! Oh that I could speak it with all earnestness, that if it might be, you might take heed of it; Those that turn aside to their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. Oh, they are lost and undone for ever! Psalm 125.5, And if any man draws back (faith God) my soul shall have no pleasure in him. A dreadful Scripture! which may make Apostates quake and tremble. God takes no pleasure in such as draw back; and it had been better for a man never to have known the ways of God, than having known them, to turn aside from the boly commandment. better to be an Atheift, a Pagan, a Turk, an Infidel, any thing, rather than an Apostate? and they that shall put their hands to the Plow, and look back, are not fit for the Kingdom of God. Oh great is the danger of Apostacy! but now without some considerable strength, you will not be kept from failing: and those failings will turn to fallings: and those fallings to fallings away, and at last falling into everlasting destruction. Now these fallings, and fallings away, do usually follow this want of spiritual strength; not being strengthened with strength in our fouls. But

But may be, you will fay to me, What course must we take, that we may get this spiritual strength in our fouls? I answer briefly, make use

of these rules and helps:

First, Be very sensible of your weakness and infirmity: be humble, be base in your own eyes: be nothing in your felves, that you may be able to fay, In Jesus Christ have I righteousness and strength, Isa. 45. 24, It was a sweet Meditation of Saint Augustin, Lord, I will be weak in my self. that I may be strong in thee. And the Apostle hath fuch a phrase: For when I am weak, then am I strong, 2 Cor. 12. 10, that is, when I am most weak in my felf, then am I most strong in a Saviour.

Secondly, If you would have this strength in your fouls: be acting the Grace which you have received already; for action increaseth strength, and strength will help action forwards: the more you are doing duty, the more will you gather strength to do duty. It was the Motto of an eminent Divine in this Nation, now with God, The way to Holiness, lyes in the works of Holiness; fo the way to get spiritual strength, lyes in doing the work you have to do, with that ftrength you have: use strength, and you shall have more Arength.

Thirdly, If you would have strength in your fouls, grow especially in corroborating strengthening Graces. What are those strengthning Graces? 1. Faith, that is a very strengthning Grace: you read of the strength of Faith: Abraham was strong in Faith, and that made him do great things: that he could against hope, believe in hope; that is, against hope of sense, believe in hope of a promife, Rom. 4. 18, so be strong

in Love, Love to Jesus Christ. Love is a very strengthening Grace, Love is strong as death, Cant. 8.6,7, Death, you know, is to ftrong, that it hath conquered all men that ever were in the World: never was there any Gyant so strong, but could be conquered by Death; there is no discharge in that War: the meaning is this: never any man encountred with Death that came off: but Love is stronger than Death. If thy heart be fired with Love to Jesus Christ, it will carry you with a great deal of strength through all difficulties, and fufferings, with patience and perseverance. 3. Again, Get more sincerity; Fob 17.9, The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clear bands shall be stronger and stronger: Oh, the more sincere you are, the more strong you are: For example, Wherein confifts the strength of a Pillar? it is in the uprightness of it: if it begins to bow and bend, and be crooked, then it falls; but the uprightness of it is the strength of it. 4. Foy; Joy, that is another strengthening Grace, Nehem. 8. 10, Neither be ye sorry, for the jey of the Lord shall be your strength. Oh, the more inward joy in the Holy Ghost you have, the more chearful you are; the more strong you are: grow in these strengthening Graces.

Fourthly, Would you have this strength in your souls? then take heed of rushing into any known sin: for sin, as it wounds the conscience, it weakens the soul also; sins against conscience, are like a thief in the Candle, which weakens our strength, and wasts our joy. Nothing weakens Sampson so much, as his sporting with his Dalilah; Never had he lost his strength, had it not been for his running into that sin: take heed therefore of sins against conscience.

Fifthly, If you would have strength in your souls, take heed of evil company, shun them as a Pest-house: for many times evil company weakens the soul more than any outward temptation, Psal. 119. 115, Depart from me ye wicked, for I will keep the Commandements of my God. It is, as if he should say, he could never set about the work of Obedience, so long as he kept company with the wicked.

Sixthly, If you would have strength in your fouls, then get more intimate and bosom-communion with Jesus Christ every day: for the truth is, all our strength is from him; I am able to do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me, Phil. 4.

13. The more you are acquainted with Christ, the more will you have of this strength which David

here in the Text speaks of.

Lastly, If you would have this strength, be much in prayer: that is an excellent Scripture, Pfal. 119. 28, My soul melteth away for heaviness, strengthen thou me according to thy word. Oh, the more we are in Prayer, and Care, and Watchfulness, and Humility, and Self-denial, and in the exercise of Grace; the more we shall find our spiritual strength increased: then we shall experimentally say with David, Thou hast strengthened me with strength in my soul.

LIGHT DISCOVERED,

AND

MAN RECOVERED.

A SERMON Preach'd

August 17. 1656.

2 Tim. 1. 10, the latter part of the Verse.

And hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

HE Apostle in the beginning of this Chapter, exhorting Timothy to a faithful discharge of his Ministerial Calling, puts in this weighty caution, in the 8 verse, Be not thou therefore ashamed of the

testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel, according to the power of God: that is, be not ashamed of the Gospel, that he calls there the Testimony of our Lord Jesus: Though it may be thou maist meet with afflictions, and oppositions in the

profession of it, yet seeing these afflictions are but sufferings for the Gospel-sake, therefore bear them patiently: it is better that thou shouldest suffer, than that the Gospel should suffer. This Caution, or Exhortation the Apostle presses from an Argument drawn from the unspeakable benefit and advantage that comes streaming to us by the Gospel, namely, Eternal life; and that the Apostle might be rightly understood, he lays down the three causes of this Eternal life or Salvation.

First, The principal and moving cause of this Salvation, that is, the Grace of God, in the foregoing verse, ver. 9. Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling: not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

Secondly, He lays down the meritorious cause of our salvation, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath merited this salvation by dying for us: in the middle part of the 10th verse, who hath abolished death, that is, who hath taken away the sting and

curse of Death.

Thirdly, He lays down the instrumental cause of our salvation, that is the Gospel, in the words that I have now read to you: And hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Let me first unlock the Cabinet of the Text, and then shew you what treasure is laid up in it: Briefly, He hath brought life. As Calvin well observes upon the Text, It is an eminent and memorable Encomium of the Gospel, that it brings life? and what life? not a temporal life, but an eternal life; therefore there is another weighty word added to express it, life and immortality, or an immortal life; a life that is not capable of corruption; an incorruptible life,

life, that never shall have end; after as many millions of years as there are drops of water in the Ocean, this eternal life and immortality shall be the same still. He hath brought this life to light, the Text fays; that is, He hath revealed it, and difcovered it, although before it was, as it were, in the dark; it was a mystery unknown to us: but now he hath revealed this mystery, he hath revealed the way to eternal life, and he hath revealed the unconceiveable joy and happiness that is wrapt up in it; and all this is done by the Gospel, the Text fays: that is, by the preaching of the Gospel: as is in the words following the Text, ver. 11, Whereunto I am appointed a Preacher, and an Apostle, and a Teacher of the Gentiles. Now Gospel, according to the acceptation of the word Everyshier, Gospel; that is, as if one should say, a Goodfpel, that is, good news; that was the old antient word for good news. The glad tidings of falvation was fuch a welcom message, that it was fit for the mouth of an Angel to publish, Luke 2. 10, And the Angel said unto them, Fear not: Behold, I do Gospel you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all Nations: or I do preach the Gospel, the welcome message of a Saviour being come into the World, by whom eternal falvation may be obtained. So then the words being thus opened, the Doctrine I shall commend to you from them, shall be this.

Doct. The knowledg of eternal life and salvation is discovered to the sons of men by the preaching of the Gospel. God brings life and immortality to light: he discovers it, reveals it; he makes it known: but how? says the Apostle, it is by the preaching of the Gospel. I shall not need to travel far to setch

in proof for this plain Doctrine: that Scripture is very remarkable, Rom. 16. 25, 26, Now to him that is of power to stablish you, according to Go-spel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest; and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all Nations for the obedience of faith The Apostle fays, The mystery; that is, the mystery of mans falvation: the mystery of our redemption by Jesus Christ, it was kept secret from the beginning of the World: but was now at last, says he, revealed by the Gospel: the mystery of mans salvation and redemption had been a clasped book for ever, if the Gospel had not been a key to open it. What doth the Apostle mean by that Scripture, 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4? But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are loft, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, (hould (hine unto them: As if he should fay, Whence is it men perish in death and destruction? Whence is it they are loft, quite loft, and perish without hope? furely, it is because the Gospel is hidden from them: either they want light, or ene want fight: though the Gospel shines about them, it shines not unto them, into their hearts, to give them the knowledg of God in the face of Jesus Christ: If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: a sad speech! Again, Whence is it so many glorious Titles are given to the Gospel? for example, it is called the word of life, Phil. 2. 16, Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejeyce in the day of Jefus Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured

in vain. It is called the Gospel of the Kingdom, Mat. 24. 14, And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached to all the world for a witness unto all Nations, and then shall the end come. It is called the word of Gods grace: Acts 14. 3, Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony to the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their bands. And it is called the word of Reconciliation, 2 Cor. 5. 19, To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Yea, it is called the word of Salvation, Acts 13.26. Men and Brethren, Children of the Stock of Abraham, and who soever among you feareth God: to you is the word of this salvation sent. And it is called the Grace of God that bringeth falvation, Tit 2. 11. Nay, yet more, it is called Salvation it felf: there cannot be a higher title given to it, than to call it Salvation it self: In Acts 28. 28, Be it known therefore unto you (fays the Apostle, speaking to those stubborn Jews), That the salvation of God is fent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. The Salvation of God, that is the Gofpel, called there the Salvation of God, is fent unto the Gentiles. All these titles sufficiently clear this truth, That the knowledg of Gernal Salvation is discovered by the Gospel. Now for the better explication of this point, there are two Quaries would be fatisfied:

First, How, or in what respect the knowledg of Salvation may be said to be discovered by the Go-spel?

Secondly, Whether the knowledg of Salvation

be discovered only by the Gospel?

First, How, or in what respect the knowledg of Salvation may be said to be discovered by the Go-spel? I answer in these three or four regards:

First, the Gospel is said to reveal the knowledg of salvation, because it reveals to us the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Author of this eternal salvation, as he is called, Heb. 5.9, And being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. And he is called the rock of salvation, 1 Cor. 10. 4. Deut. 32. 15. And he is called a Horn of Salvation, Luke 1.69, And hath raised up an Horn of salvation for us in the house of his servamt David. In this regard the Gospel may well be compared to the Star that led the wise men to Jesus Christ: The Gospel is that Star that leads us to the Day-spring from on high, to him that is the Morning-star indeed, to him that is salvation it self, cloathed in our slesh.

Secondly, The Gospel may be said to reveal salvation in this regard, because it is a means of conveying the spirit of grace into the soul, who is the applier of this Salvation. Hence it is, the Gospel is called the Ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 3.8, How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? And you read in Asts 10.44, that while Peter was preaching to Cornelius and his Company, the Holy Ghost fell upon them: While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word: so that the Holy Ghost was dispenced to them in the preaching of the Gospel.

Thirdly, The Gospel may be said to reveal salvation, in that it is an Instrument of begetting saith in the soul, which is the hand whereby we lay hold on this salvation: Faith comes by hearing

of the Gospel, Rom. 10. 17.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The Gospel is ordained by God to be an Instrument of Regeneration, and Sanctification, and of Edification.

Of Regeneration, 1 Cor. 4. 15, For though you have ten thousand Instructors in Christ, yet have you not many Fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.

And then it is the Instrument of our Sanctification too, in John 17. 17, Sanctifie them by thy truth,

(faith our Saviour), for thy word is truth.

And it is the Instrument of our Edification, or building us up in our most holy saith, Asts 20. 32, And now, Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace (that is, the Gospel) which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheri-

tance among them that are sanstified.

Now then, if the Gospel be the Instrument both of our Regeneration, Sanctification, and Edification, it must needs be also the Instrument of our Salvation: that is for the first Quary, How the Gospel may be said to reveal Salvation? Because it reveals Jesus Christ, who is the Author of this Salvation; and it is an Instrument of conveying the spirit of Grace into the heart, who is the applier of this Salvation, and works faith, which is the hand whereby we lay hold on this Salvation: and it is the Instrument of working Regeneration, Sanctification, and Edification in us: and therefore must be the Instrument of our Salvation.

The second Quary is this: But is the knowledg of Salvation revealed only by the Gospel, may some say? Does not the Law also reveal Salvation? Does not the Law say, Do this, and live? To this I answer, Though the Law may be said in some sense to reveal the knowledg of Salvation: Yet

there

there is a very great difference between the Laws revealing, and the Gospels revealing it; and that in these two respects especially: First, the Law does not reveal the knowledg of salvation so clearly. Secondly, The Law does not reveal the know-

ledg of Salvation fo effectually.

First, The Law does not reveal the knowledg of falvarion fo clearly: for it reveals it only in types, and shadows; and resemblances: therefore the Apostle says, Heb. 10. 1, The Law having the shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things. He compares the Law to a shadow; it had a shadow of good things to come: For example, The Law told us indeed of a Saviour that was to come into the World, and the Law told us of the blood of Jesus Christ; but it was typisied in the multitude of those bloody Sacrifices that were offered from day to day: and it told us of heaven, and the heavenly inheritance: but it was but obfcurely, it was shadowed out by an earthly Canaan, or the Land of promise: whereas now the Gospel brings in Jesus Christ fully and clearly exhibited; it brings in Jesus Christ as the Day-star from on high, which does enlighten us, and the Son of Righteousness that does dispel all those clouds and · shadows that were in the Ceremonial Law: The Gospel does, as it were, draw the Curtain, that now we may with open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, 2 Cor. 3. last verse: therefore the Law does not discover the knowledg of salvation so clearly.

Secondly, The Law does not discover the knowledg of Salvation so effectually: True, the Law hath told us of Salvation, but it doth not shew us the means whereby we may attain it: the Law shews us the way, but it does not help us to walk th

2 (

de

Et

in the way; the Law hath commanded us to obey, but it gives us no strength to perform: therefore the Apostle says, The Law was weak because of our flesh, Rom. 8. 3, For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. Again, The Apostle tells us expresly, Heb. 7. 19, The Law made nothing perfect. The Law could never bring Man to Heaven; never was mortal man faved by the Law: It is true, indeed, it required obedience, but it gave us no strength to perform that obedience: it exacted obedience upon the penalty of a dreadful curfe, but it did not enable us to avoid that curfe; for its faid, Curfed be he that continueth not in all the words of this Law to do them, Deut. 27. 26. And it's faid, the man that doth them, shall live in them, Gal. 3. 12. Lev. 18. 5. I, but the Law gave no frength to do what it did enjoyn: I, but now the Gospel reveals the knowledg of Salvation more effe-Aually: because, as it commands us to obey, forit gives us ftrength to perform: the Law commands, but it is the Gospel that helps us: How doth it help us? it helps us thus, Because it directs us to Jesus Christ by whom we may have strength: Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength, Ifa.45.24. And fays the Apostle, I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me, Phil. 4. 13.

I, but here it may be objected: Does not the Apostle say, That the Gospel is the savour of death unto death, as well as the savour of life unto life? 2 Cor. 2. 16. Now, if the Gospel be the savour of death unto death, then how can it be said to bring

Eternal Salvation? To this I answer:

When the Gospel is said to be the savour of D 2 death

death unto death, it is not spoken because the Gospel does kill and condemn simply, and in its own nature; but through the corruption of mens hearts that do not obey it, but do reject it, that do refist it. A Kings pardon, you know, does not kill any by it felf, but by the contempt of a Malefactor that does reject it; and to the pardon may double the Malefactors guilt, and bring upon him a more speedy and fearful execution. So here, the Gracious pardon of God that is tendred in the Gospel, does not kill, or condemn any init felf, or in is own nature, but through the contempt of those that do difregard it: in this regard, not simply, but accidentally, through the corruptions of mens Hearts, and Natures; in this regard, the Gospel may be faid to increase a mans curse and condemnation: Whereas now the Law in its own nature is faid to be a killing Letter, because it leaves a man in a state of death, and leaves him under a curfe, and does not shew him the way at all 10w to avoid that curse, as the Gospel does : therefore the Apostle says, The Law is a killing Letter of it self, but the Spirit giveth life, 2 Cor. 3. 6. because in the preaching of the Gospel, the Spirit of God is conveyed into our fouls, which enables us in fome acceptable manner to perform what the Gospel enjoyns: and thus you have the Point opened to you, That the knowledg of Life and Immortality, that Eternal Salvation that is laid up for the Saints in light , is discovered and revealed by the Preaching of the Gospel. For the Use of the Point now.

And the first is by way of Information; and there are four Doctrinal Inferences, or Lessons, that we may learn fron this point thus opened.

1 50

1. See how infinitely we stand indebted and ingaged to our gracious God, that hath lookt upon us here in this Nation, and in this City; who hath brought us into the fellowship of the Gospel, and hath kept us in that fellowship for fo many years together. Oh, that we should live under the showres and Sun-shine of the glorious Gospel of Jefus Chrift, for almost a hundred years together without interruption! What a fingular mercy is this, if we did but know how to prize it? He hath scarce dealt so with any Nation under Heaven as he hath dealt with us: What did God fee more in us than in Turks, Indians, and Pagans, that never heard of God nor Gospel? He foresaw how we would despise this precious Pearl, and how we would be ready to trample it under foot: God forefaw how weary we would be of those glorious Gospel-mysteries that are discovered to us from day to day: yet it did not hinder him from bestowing this precious Jewel upon us; therefore, not to us, not to us, but to his own Name be the Glory.

2. A fecond Lesson we may learn by way of inference, is this: If the knowledg of eternal life be discovered in the Gospel, then it follows, Whereever God hath a Church planted, or a Church to be planted, there will still be need of a powerful, quickning, soul-searching Ministry, for the discovery and making known the Mysteries of Salvation: The publick preaching Ministry of the Gospel, is that standing Ordinance that must continue in the Church of Jesus Christ, so long as he hath a Church here upon earth: and this appears by that of the Apostle, Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13, And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors; and Teachers, for

the perfecting of the Saints. for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, (How long? till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledg of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Chrift: That is, to the end of the World: God will have a standing Ministry, where-ever he hath a Church planted, or to be planted: God will have a Gospel standing Ministry, till all the Saints be gathered. If this be so, then how justly are they to be reproved, that think that a Gospel-ministry, of all other things, may be best spared? if there be any fuch here, mark what I fay, You could ill want any of the four Elements, Earth, Air, Fire, or Water: You could ill want Salt, Bread, Drink, Cloathing: let me tell you, a Gospel-ministry is as needful as any of these I have named: as Earth. Air, Fire, Water: as Salt, Bread, Drink, Cloathing: for does not Solomon fay, Prov. 29. 18, Where there is no vision, the people perish? and would you have your fouls perish everlastingly? Is not our foul worth a whole World? It was a noble speech of Luther, It were better that the whole World were in a Combustion and Confusion, than that the Gospel should not be preached, or that any one soul that belongs to Jesus Christ should be neglected. And it was spoken concerning Chrysostom, who was a famous Light in the Church, It was better that the Sun should not shine, than that Chrysoftom should not preach: and it was a witty observation of a Father, speaking concerning the beheading of John Baptist; Herod took off John Baptists head, because of the promise he made to the Damosel, Whatever she ask'd him, to the half of his Kingdom, should be granted; fays that Father, speaking of this

this passage, Herod might have kept his promise, though he had not taken off John Baptists head: for he promifed the Damosel, to give her to the half of his Kingdom; But now, fays he, John Baptists head was worth a whole Kingdom. Pray tell me, you that have flight thoughts of the Gofpel, or of a Gospel-ministry, Does not the Scripture compare Ministers to Planters, to Builders, to Fathers, to Remembrancers, to Stars, to spiritual Guides, and to a City upon a Hill, and the like? If ever you be trees of Righteousness in Gods Garden, it is a Ministry that hath planted you: and if ever you be spiritual stones in Gods everlafting Building, it must be the Ministry must build you: if ever you be Sons and Daughters begotten to eternal Life, it is the Ministry must beget you, For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel, 1 Cor. 4. 15, says the Apostle; and if ever your feet be guided into the way that leads into everlasting life, it is a Gospel-ministry must guide you: and if ever you be led to Jesus Christ, as the Wise-men were by the Star in the East, when Christ was born in Betlehem, it must be these spiritual Stars that are in the firmament of Gods Church that must lead you. Now judg in your felves therefore, whether a Gospel-ministry can be spared?

3. The third Doctrinal inference is this; If the knowledg of eternal Salvation comes by the Gofpel, then it teacheth us this Lesson also; How infinitely it does concern us to prize, and fruitfully to improve our Gospel-seasons, those opportunities God puts into our hands for the enriching of our souls: but especially, we snould improve our Sabbath-day opportunities, because Sabbaths are the

D 4

Mar-

Market-days of Eternity, the Markets wherein we must make provision for Eternity: Oh, how careful should we be to improve these Gospel-seasons! Let me tell you, Gospel-seasons are very precious feafons, because marvellous precious things are tendred to you in the preaching of the Golpel; more precious than all the Gold of Ophir, more precious than all the Kingdoms of the World, if they were in your own power: for in the preaching of the Gospel, a precious Christ, who is the Pearl of price, worth ten thousand thousand Worlds, and more worth: this precious Christ, this Pearl of Price may now be obtained: and a precious Covenant, a Covenant made between God and the foul, this precious Covenant may now be confirmed, and precious Evidences of Eternal Salvation may be now gained; and likewise precious Graces, and precious Faith, and precious Hope, and precious Love, Humility, Repentance, and Self-denial: thefe precious Graces may be now procured; a precious foul may be faved, a precious pardon may be fealed: Oh, what precious things then are tendred to you in the preaching of the Gospel! these opportunities therefore are exceeding precious: if Christ be thine now, he is thine for ever; Oh, that you you did but know the price of these things that are tendred to you in the preaching of the Gospel! if a condemned prisoner did know how precious the pardon that was brought to him was, would he flight it? Here is a precious Pardon, Grace, Mercy, Peace, all tendred to you in the preaching of the Gospel. How infinitely then does it concern us to improve our Gospel-seasons?

4. The fourth Lesson by way of inference, is this, It lets us see the contempt, nay, the neglest

of the Gospel, is a very dangerous in; for if the knowledg of Salvation be brought to the soul by the Gospel, then certainly he that neglects the Gospel, neglects Salvation, and Salvation it selfshall not save that man that despiseth the remedy, yea, that neglects Salvation; says the Apostle, How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation? Heb. 2. 3, As if he had said, It is impossible to escape eternal Damnation, if we do but neglect this eternal Salvation: These are the Lessons from this Doctrine, and that's the first Use, of Information.

The second Use I shall make of this Doctrine, it is for Examination: If so be the knowledg of eternal Life be brought by the Gospel, be discovered, and revealed by the Gospel: then take occasion to call your selves to an account, and see whether this eternal Salvation be so discovered to you, that you may be partakers of it; otherwise, what advantage will it be to you, to hear that Life and Immortality is brought to light, unless this Light do shine into your souls? But may be you will say to me, How may we do to know that the Day-spring from on High, hath shined into my soul? that God hath called me out of darkness into his marvellous Light? that he hath discovered the Mysteries of Salvation to me, even to me?

I answer, You may know it briefly thus: If the Light of Life be revealed to thy Soul, then certainly thy knowledg will not be a Notional knowledg only, but an Experimental knowledg; thou wilt not have a knowledg swimming in thy head only, but a soaking, and sinking knowledg in thy heart: thou wilt not only know Christ, but taste Christ; thou wilt taste that hidden Manna, Rev. 2. 17, To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hid-

den Manna. Thou wilt not only know, but taste the bitterness of sin: and thou wilt say, Fer. 2.19, It is an evil and bitter thing that I have for saken the Lord, and that his fear is not in me. A blind man may talk of Colours that never faw them, and a hungry man may talk of a full dinner that never tasted it: so a carnal man may have a great deal of knowledg in his head, and never rellish nor taste it: but he that hath the knowledg of Salvation revealed to his foul, he hath a Light shining in his heart, Fer. 31. 34, And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall know me from the least of them, unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; that is, they shall not need to be taught those experimental truths that are written in their own hearts, by the finger of the Spirit of God. A man that hath this Life and Immortality brought to light by the Gospel, will say, You need not tell me that fin is a bitter thing, I have tasted the bitterness of it; You need not tell me, the favour of God is fweet and lovely; Oh, it is fweeter to me than life it felf; You need not tell me that Jesus Christ is very Amiable and Beautiful, I fee him to be fo with my eye of faith; You need not tell me, there is a marvellous power in the death of Christ for the crucifying of fin, I do experimentally know it: when a man hath this experimental knowledg, he will fay as the Apostle, 1 Tim. 1. 13, I was before a Blasphemer, and a Persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained Mercy because I did it ignorantly. When a man hath the feeling and experience of spiritual Truths in his own foul, then may he be fure that Life and Immortality is brought to light by the Gospel unto him.

A third Use I shall make of this Doctrine, it is of Reproof: Two forts there are, that are justly liable to the reproof of this Doctrine. First, It condemns and crys down that Hellish practice of the whore of Rome, and the Popish Clergy, who lock up the Scriptures, and keep Millions of fouls from the knowledg of the Gospel, from the knowledg of the mysteries of Salvation; this is all one, as if they should lock them up in the pit of Infernal darkness: for if so be Salvation, or Eternal Life be brought to light by the Gospel, and this Gofpel be to them but as a Light in a dark Lanthorn, must not they needs inevitably perish? Oh cruel bloody Butchers! Oh mercilels mischievous Souldestroyers! may we say of the Romish Synagogue: well may the whore of kome be faid to be drunk with blood, because she is drunk not only with the blood of the bodies of Men, but with the blood of the Souls of men. Oh, the tender Mercies of God that hath opened our eyes to fee better things, and to free us from the bondage and flavery of that Antichristian yoke: this is a great mercy to be delivered from the poylon of those serpents, and a greater mercy than ever we can be thankful for. But take this withal, I befeech you, Take heed that Popery do not creep in at a back-dore of Toleration: let us bless God for that liberty that we have; but take heed that you do not hanker after those Popish Doctrines that may poyson the foul, and that will provoke God to remove his Candlestick from amongst us.

A fecond fort to be reproved, are those that grow weary of the Gospel: I, but may be you will say, Are there any so bad in our days, as to be weary of the Gospel? yea, my brethren, many there

are that are weary of the Truths of it: many that are weary of the Profession of it, many that are

weary of the Power and Practife of it.

First, Many there are that are weary of the Truths of the Gospel, that chuse rather to be raking in the stinking puddles of Popery, Arminianism, Socinianism, and other damnable heresies, as the Apostle calls them; they chuse these rather than the clear fountain of truth revealed in the Gospel: Oh, these are in a very dangerous condition, when men chuse rather to be Masters of new opinions, than to be disciples of old Truths: these men may be said to be weary of the Gospel.

Secondly, Are there not some that are weary of the Profession of the Gospel? such as are Atheists, and prophane Libertines, Swearers, Drunkards, and others of that Gang, that could be contented that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should be extinguished, that the Candle might be put out, so they may but sin more freely: but our Saviour hath read their doom, John 3. 19, This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are

evil.

Thirdly, Are there not some weary of the Power and Practice of the Gospel? such are Hypocrites, Apostates, luke-warm Professors, and carnal Gospellers, that have (it is true) a form of godliness, but are as far from the power and practice of it, as Pagans are from the profession of it: Are not these worthy think you to be reproved? yea, God reproves them, and his Word reproves them, and their own consciences will one day reprove them: nay, that Gospel which now they despite and undervalue, will then arraign, indict, and condemn them,

at that great day: for if the Lord Jesus Christ will come in slames of fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not his Gospel, as it is 2 Thes. 1.8, What will become of them that are weary of it, that despise it, that do undervalue it?

The fourth and last Use (to shut up this point), is this, If the knowledg of salvation be discovered by the preaching of the Gospel; then let me press upon you three very necessary and seasonable Duties.

First, Learn to prize the Gospel while you have it: labour to know the worth of it now you have it, left God let you fee the worth of it in the want of it, when it is too late: God will never hang a Jewel upon a fwines fnout; God will never long continue the Gospel in mercy to a People that do not value it. True indeed, some there are that are ready to fay of the Gospel, as Naaman the Assyrian in like case; Are not Abana and Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them to be clean? So some will say, Are not the doctrines of Popery, and other corrupt do-Arines, better than all the doctrines of the Gofpel? But I hope you have not fo learnt Christ: Oh, learn to prize the Gospel as the doctrine of your falvation, as the evidence of your inheritance; Do you learn to prize it as the tree of life, which is for the healing of the Nations, as the pledg of the hope you have of eternal life? Labour for fuch an esteem of the Gospel as David had, Psal. 119. 111, Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoycing of my heart: Oh, do you now learn to prize the Gospel as the greatest priviledg that ever God did bestow upon you next to Jesus Christ, and his Spirit.

A fecond Duty I would press upon you, is this, not only to prize the Gospel, but to make use of it, and improve it for your own spiritual advantage: Tet a little while (faith our Saviour) is the light with you: walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for be that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth, John 12. 35. Oh, that you and I could learn to make hay while the Sun fhines! Oh, that we could improve these opportunities while we do enjoy them! If fo be the Gofpel should be taken away from you, before your peace is made with God, before you have gotten Jesus Christ into your hearts; before the Covenant between God and your Souls be fealed; Oh, how fad and doleful would your conditions be! fure I am, we were never in so much danger of losing the Gospel as at this day, for our barrenness, and unfruitfulness, and weariness of the Gospel. We are ready to fay, Mal. 1. 13, What a weariness is it to ferve the Lord? and for our contempt of the means of grace. Now if fuchra day should come as God threatens, Micah 3.6, Therefore night (hall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision, and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine: and the Sun shall go down over the Prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. If fuch a day should come as God threatens, Amos 8. 11, Behold, the days come faith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of bearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the North even to the East: they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it: Oh, what a black, doleful, difinal day would this be!

Thirdly, It should reach us to walk worthy of

the

the Gospel, Phil. 1.27, Only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ. Oh, let us learn to lead Gospel-lives under Gospel-light; let it never be faid to us, that the Gospel is a grace to us, but we are a difgrace to the Gospel ; I beseech you, my brethren, study to live up to your light: seeing God hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light, walk as children of the light: follow that golden Rule of the Apostle, Phil. 4.8, Finally, brethren, what soever things are true, what soever things are honest, what soever things are just, what soever things are pure, what soever things are lovely, what soever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things, speak of these things: Oh, could we but once learn to cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light; could we once be brought to this, to repent of our Gospel-sins, may be the Lord may lengthen our tranquility: may be God may revive his work in the midst of our days: may be glory may yet dwell in our Land, and make us a name and praise throughout the whole earth: But if we go on in a course of Rebellion; if we rebel against the light; if we despise the means of grace; if we undervalue those precious seasons of Salvation that are tendred to us; if we grieve the holy Spirit of God from day to day, and cause him to withdraw from us; what a black and doleful day may feize upon us! The Lord work thefe things upon every one or our hearts, that still the Gospel in its power and purity may be continued to us.

CHRIST'S PROVISION

FOR

MANS DIRECTION.

Ifaiah XL. 11.

He shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd, he shall gather his Lambs with his Arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

HE first verse of this Chapter will tell you what the scope of the Chapter is; namely, to speak comfort to the poor captive Jews in their return from Babylon: and the comfort that is here proclai-

med, it is derived from a double Spring: 1. From the Promulgation of the Gospel. 2. From the coming of Jesus Christ in the Flesh, who is the Marrow of the Gospel. 1. From the Promulgation of the Gospel, and that is amplified two ways: from the Herald that Proclaims it, and by the Place where it was proclaimed. 1. By the Herald that proclaimed it: namely, John the Baptist, called the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare

be

I

he

in

th

th

ve

hi

po

ma

an

po

Sho

ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desart a way for our God. 2. It is amplified by the place where it should be proclaimed, namely, in Sion, or Ferusalem: in the oth verse, O Sion that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high Mountain: O ferusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength: lift it up, be not afraid; say to the Cities of Judah, behold your God. Then Christs coming in the flesh, that is described two ways: 1. By his Terrour to his Enemies. 2. By his mild carriage and behaviour towards his own People. By his Terrour towards his Enemies, in the foregoing verfe, the 10th ver. Behold, the Lord will come with a strong hand, and his Arm shall rule for him: behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. Then he is described here by his meek and mild carriage towards his People, in the words I have read unto you, He shall feed his flock like, &c.

Let me first open the terms of the Text, and then come to some points of Instruction: He shall feed. The Government of the Lord Jesus Christ in his Church, and towards his Chosen, is exprest by three hames: He is call'd a Ruler, a Leader, and a Shepherd. He is called a Ruler ביזשל in the Hebrew, in Micah 5.2, But thou Beth-leem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Ifrael, whose goings forth have been from of old; from everlasting. Now Jesus Christ rules three ways: I. By his Commanding-power. 2. By his Compellingpower.3. By his Perswading-power. He hath a Commanding-power, All power is given to me in Heaven and Earth, Matth. 18. 35. He hath a Compellingpower, Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before

before me, Luk. 19.27. Then he hath likewise a Perswading-power, Gen. 9. 27, God shall perswade Japhet, and he shall dwell in the Tents of Shem. 2dly, His Government is exprest by this Name, He is a Leader to his people. Now Christ is a Leader to his People three ways: 1. By teaching of his people: his very enemies did acknowledg it, Mar. 12. 14, We know thou teachest the way of God in truth. He teacheth them by going before them in a way of good example, John 13. 15, I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done. He leads them likewise by drawing of them, Cant. 1.4, Draw me, we will run after thee. Then, as he is a Ruler, and a Leader, so he is a Shepherd: his Government is comprised under this Name, He Shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd. And here in the Text, where under the name of Feeding, is comprifed all the necessary attendances and accommodations that conduce to the fafety and welfare of the Flock; fuch as providing of them Pasture, and protecting of them from the danger and mischief of Wolves and Lyons, and Beafts of Prey; and likewife in preventing their stragling and wandring in the Wilderness: And in curing of those Diseases that are incident to Sheep: All these are meant by Feeding. Oh, the Richness, and Compleatness of this precious Redeemer! well may the Apostle fay, He is able to fave to the utmost those that come to God by him. And well may the Apostle say, Christ is all and in all, because he is both the Ruler, Leader, and Shepherd; the Prince and Captain of our Salvation, and Saviour, and all.

He shall gather his Lambs with his Arms. The Lord Jesus Christ hath a tender care of all his Sheep, that none of them be lost, as he says in that

Hea-

Heavenly Prayer, John 17. 11, While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy Name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the Son of Perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. I, but he hath the most tender and pitiful compassion towards those that are his Lambs, that is, young Beginners, Babes in Christ, those he gathers in his Arms: so the Text tells us, those he carries in his bosom; that is, he deals favourably with them; those he cherishes with all indulgence; He does not quench the smoothing slax, nor break the

bruised read, Matth. 12. 20.

Then he gently leads those that are with young; or those that give suck; the Hebrew word mins figfies both. either those that are with young, or those that give fuck. The Prophet here in the Text alludes to the manner of Jacobs dealing with his Flocks; See what a compassionate man that good man was, as you may read, Gen. 33.13. The flocks and the herds that are with young, they are with me: and if men should over-drive them but one day, all the flocks would dye. What a care had Facob of all his flocks, especially of those that were with young! so the Lord Christ he gently leads those that are with young; that is, weak Christians, such as are easily offended, fuch as are dejected, and discouraged; such as are full of infirmities and imperfections, he gently leads them; that is, he exercises a great deal of pity, and patience, and compassion, and tenderness towards them; In all their afflictions he is afflicted with them, Ma. 63.9. He hath Sympathizing Bowelstowards those that are full of Infirmities : his Bowels are troubled as it were for them; fer. 31. 20, Is Ephraim a dear Son? is he a pleasant Child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember

him still, therefore my Bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord: So that here is gentlenes in bearing with them, and patience in suffering of them: In a word, the Lord Jesus Christ, he is a meek, a gentle, a mild, a compassionate Saviour, that is the sum of the whole verse; he is of a very sweet, amiable, pliable disposition: As God hath sitted him with a Body, so he hath sitted him with a Heart to be a merciful and compassionate Redeemer. The words being thus opened, there are two things in them especially presented to your view: 1. Christs relation to his People. 2dly, His mild carriage towards them in that relation.

1. Christs relation to his People, that you have in these words, He shall feed his flock like a Shepherd.

2dly, You have his Meek, Mild, and Gracious carriage towards them; he does both Protect them, and Feed them, and Pity them, and gathers them in his Arms, and carries them in his Bolom, and gently Leads them; and accordingly there are these two Points of Doctrine that are most eminently and clearly held forth in the Text.

Doct. 1. That Jesus Christ is that Blessed Shepherd, that is able both to feed and protect his People

here, and to give them eternal Life hereafter.

Doct. 2. That the Lord Jefus Christ in his carriage towards his People, hath a tender respect to

their Infirmities.

I begin with the first Doctrine: The Lord Jesus Christ is that blessed Shepherd that is abundantly able to feed and protect his People here, and to give them eternal life hereaster.

For the proof of this Doctrine, take two or three Scriptures, in Joh. 10. 11, Lam the good Shep-

herd,

herd, the good Shepherd giveth his life for the Sheep: and in Heb. 13.20, He is called the great Shepherd of the Sheep, Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, &c. And he is called the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, in 1 Pet. 2.20, For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls: so that doubtless, Jesus Christ is the most blessed, the best, the greatest, the sweetest Shepherd that ever was, as will appear by these four reasons.

First, Because he hath the greatest care over

them.

Secondly, Because he hath the greatest love to his Sheep.

Thirdly, Beeause he hath the greatest power that

ever Shepherd had.

Fourthly, Because he hath the greatest reward

for them that can possibly be bestowed.

First, Jesus Christ hath the greatest care over his Sheep; for he seeks them when they are lost: I come, says he, to seek and to save those which were lost. Luk. 1.9,20, For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. And he gathers them from the ends of the world, he setches themfrom all corners of the earth; there is not one of his sheep, that is, not one that belongs to the election of grace, but in what place soever he be, though among Pagans, Heathens, and Insidels; of what condition soever he be, whether high or low, rich or poor, noble or ignoble, of what calling or employment soever: As some will be ready to complain and say, I am lockt up under a Calling, I would be better if my Calling would let me: I,

but there is not one of Christs sheep that belongs to the election of Grace, though he be lockt up under a Calling, but the Lord Jesus Christ will seek him out in what condition or Calling soever he be. That's the first reason, He hath the greatest care over his sheep, to gather them into his Fold.

2dly, Because he hath the greatest love to his sheep, such love as the like was never heard of: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend, John 15. 13. There cannot be greater love manifested than this: but fuch love hath the Lord Jefus Christ, he hath laid down his life, that good Shepherd laid down his life for his sheep, as in the forenamed place, John 10. 11, I am the good Shepherd, the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. You know Jacob Theweth a great deal of love to his sheep, in that (as he tells you) he was in the day-time parched with heat, the drought consumed him: and in the nighttime pinched with frost: and he broke his sleep many times to watch his sheep, Gen. 31.40, My sleep, fays he, departed from mine eyes. That was great love; but David shewed greater love to his Flocks, Pfal. 78. 70, he followed the Ewes great with young, when God took him from the Sheepfolds to wield the Scepter. And he shewed yet greater love to his Flock, as he tells you in 1 Sam. 17.34,35, And Pavid Said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his Fathers sheep, and there came a Lion and a Bear, and took a Lamb out of the flock, and I went out after him, & smote him, delivered it out of his mouth, and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him; thy servant slew both the Lion and the Bear: David ventured very far, he ventured

his life for one Lamb of the Flock; but Jesus Christ, that blessed Shepherd, did not only venture his life, but he laid down his life for his sheep; and he did not venture to grapple with an ordinary Lion, but with that roaring Lion that walks about seeking whom he may devour: Nay, he did not only wrestle with that roaring Lion, but with all the powers of darkness, he wrestled with principalities and powers; Nay, he wrestled with the wrath of a sin-revenging God, and all that he might save his poor sheep: therefore never was there such a loving Shepherd as the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the second reason.

Thirdly, He hath the greatest power and ability that ever Shepherd had; for this is extraordinary, that he makes all the sheep he hath: all his sheep are the workmanship of his hands, Psalm 100. 3, Know ye that the Lord he is God, it is he that hath made us, and not we our selves: we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. He hath that power that he can do whatfoever pleafeth him in heaven and in earth: All power in heaven and earth is given to him, Matth. 26. 18. He hath that power that he is able to deliver his sheep from the gates of hell; He hath said, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against them, Matth. 16. 18. He hath that power that he can do that for his sheep that all the world, and all the Princes in the world cannot do for them; and therefore he must needs be the best Shepherd That's the third reason.

Fourthly, He hath the greatest reward also to bestow upon every one of his sheep: Alas! his sheep give nothing to him: My goodness does not extend to thee, Psalm 16.2. We can bestow nothing upon this blessed Shepherd, he hath no need of any thing we have; I, but he bestows a very rich por-

E 4

tion

tion upon his sheep, a glorious reward: he feeds them, he cloaths them, he protects them here in this world, and gives them eternal life hereaster.

First, This bleffed Shepherd feeds all his sheep; he feeds them first by his Word, and then by his

Sacraments.

He feeds them by his Word, by fending his Meffengers as under-Shepherds to feed his Flock: It is a Gospel- promise, that in Fer. 3. 15, I will give you Pastors according to my own heart, which shall feed you with knowledg and understanding. And it was one end of our Saviours alcention into Heaven, and a great bleffing we have by it; he ascended into heaven that he might give gifts unto men, Ephes. 4. 8, 11, 12, 13 verles; Wherefore he faith, when he afcended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men; and he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists; and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. He gave gifts to men: he did not only give extraordinary gifts, fuch as Apostles, and Prophets, and Evangelists; but ordinary gifts to Pastors and Teachers, for the building up of his own body.

And as he feeds his sheep with his Word, so with his Sacraments: and here is such feeding as you did never hear the like; for this blessed Shepherd feeds his sheep with his own sless and blood, his own sless that was crucified to satisfie Divine Justice; and his own blood that was shed to quench the fire of Gods wrath that was kindled against them: this is that our Saviour tells you of in John 8. 51, I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live

for ever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. And in Revel. 1. 5, He hath loved us, and washt us from our sins in his blood. As they say of the Pelican, when her young ones are ready to die, she opens her breast with her bill, and seeds them with her blood; so the Lord Jesus Christ seeds every one of his sheep with his slesh and blood.

Again, He feeds the fouls of his sheep with the graces of his own blessed Spirit: as Faith, Repentance, Love, Humility, Sincerity, and the like, which are spiritual food, suitable to the spiritual nature

of the foul.

So he feeds his sheep with the Promises, which are faid to be breasts of consolation, Isa. 66. 11, That ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of consolation: that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. With the breafts of consolation, that is, with the precious promises; And this is that which that good King Hezekiah intended in that speech of his, Ifa. 38.16, Oh Lord, by these things men live: and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live. These precious promises made good to my foul, by thefe do men live, and thefe are the life of my Spirit. Thus you fee, how this bleffed Shepherd feeds his Sheep. But yet more: He does not only feed his Sheep, but he gives them Stomachs also; look as it is in point of knowledg, we are not able to fee him of our felves, we cannot fee him without him, for he is our Light: and as in point of performance, we are not able to believe on him, nor come unto him without him, for he is our strength: so here, neither can we feed on Jesus Christ, nor the promises, nor the graces of his Spirit,

Spirit, until he gives us a mouth to taste these things; therefore the Apostle exhorts us, as new-born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the word that we may grow thereby; if so be we have tasted that the Lord is gracious; as if he should have said, You cannot feed, unless you have tasted of this blessed

Saviour, 1 Pet. 2. 2, 3.

Secondly, As he feeds, so he cloaths his Sheep; here amongst men the Sheep cloath the Shepherd, the Fleece of the sheep cloaths the Shepherd: But here, this bleffed Shepherd cloaths every one of his Sheep; he cloaths them with costly raiment indeed, Ezek. 16. 10, 11, 12, I cloathed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with Badgers skin, and I girded thee about with fine linnen, and I covered thee with Silk; I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a Chain upon thy neck, and I put a Jewel on thy forehead, and ear-rings in thine ears, and a beautiful Crown upon thy head; thus wast thou decked with Gold and Silver, and thy rayment was of fine Linnen, and Silk; and broidred work. Therefore it is that you read that the Apostle bids us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 13. 14. He cloaths us with the Robe of his own Righteousness: He covers us with the garments of Salvation, as a Brridegroom decketh himself with Ornaments, and as a Bride adorneth her felf with her Jewels, Ifa. 61. 10.

Thirdly, He does protect his Sheep, and watcheth over them from Morning to Evening: he hath his eye continually upon them: therefore David speaking of the Lord being his Shepherd; then says he, Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy

Rod and thy Staff they comfort me, Pial. 23. 4.

Fourthly,

Fourthly and lastly, He gives to his Sheep Eternal Life, John 10.28, And 1 give unto my Sheep Eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall

any man pluck them out of my hand.

Thus you have the Point opened, That Jesus Christ is that Blessed Shepherd, who is abundantly able to feed and protest his People here, and to give them Eternal Life hereafter, because he hath the greatest Care over them, the greatest Love to them, the greatest Power that ever Shepherd had, and the greatest Reward to give them that can possibly be bestowed.

Now for the Uses of this Point, and they are three, by way of Instruction, Examination or

Tryal, and Exhortation.

First, By way of Instruction: Oh, see the Bleffed, the Happy, the Comfortable Condition of all those that have a part and interest in the Lord Tefus Christ, this Blessed Shepherd! what tongue of Men or Angels is able to express the happy and bleffed condition of that man that hath gotten Jefus Christ for his Portion! fuch a one shall be fure of Food, of Cloathing, of Protection, of Joy, of Comfort, of Happiness, of Eternal Life, and what not? Oh, how may that foul dance for joy, that hath gotten Tefus Christ to be his Shepherd! furely it is a comfortable and heart-chearing meditation in these turbulent and stormy times, when the Church of God hath fo many enemies, and fo few friends; when the Antichristian Faction roars against the little Flock of this bleffed Shepherd, like fo many Bears to devour them; here is the comfort, Jesus Christ sticks as close to his Flock, as ever David did to his Flock, when the Lyon and the Bear came to make a prey of them : Fear not little Flock (fays

our Saviour) it is your Fashers good pleasure to give you a Kingdom, Luk. 12. 32. As he said when he was failing in the Boat with Cefar, the Boatman beginning to be afraid because of the tempeftuousness of the waters, Fear not man, thou carrieft Cefar and all his Fortunes with him; fo may it be faid of every one that hath Tefus Christ in the Boat with him, Let him not fear: true indeed, the Ship wherein Christ and his Sheep are, may be tofsed, but it can never be over-turned, because the Shepherd and Pilot are in it; therefore, happy is the condition of all those that have an interest in this Bleffed Shepherd. But on the contrary, Oh, the deplorable and desperate condition of all those that have not Jesus Christ for their Shepherd! what are they think you? they are just in such a case as God threatneth Babylon shall be, Ifa. 13. 14, God fays, that Babylon shall be as the chased Roe, and as a Sheep that no man taketh up. This is the case of every one that is yet out of Christ, exposed to be a prey to that roaring Lyon that walketh about feeking whom he may devour; those that have not an interest in Christ, God threatens them, Hof. 4. 16, I will feed them as a Lamb in a large place: I will feed them, the same Hebrew word pyr that fignifies to feed, fignifies to let them wander, Num. 14. 33, God let the children of Israel wander in the wilderness for forty years together: So God lets those that have not an interest in Christ, to wander in the Wilderness to their own destruction. Oh, that God would open the eyes of those that have not yet secured their interest in Jesus Christ, that they may fee what they are, and where they are, and what danger they are exposed to ! So much of the first Ule of Instruction. The

The second Use is by way of Examination; How nearly does it concern every one of us, to call our felves to an account, whether we be in the number of Christs Sheep, or no? otherwise, we can have no comfort by this Doctrine. But may be you will fay to me, How shall we do certainly to know that we are the Sheep of Christ, and that Christ is that Shepherd that feeds us like a Flock? For anfwer to this; We cannot curiously pry into Gods decree, to tell you who are not his Sheep; for it may be there are many that belong to the Election of Grace, that is, many are the Sheep of Christ, that are not yet called, nor converted, that are wandring in the Wilderness yet; and though the Lord will not fuffer them to wander to Destruction, yet for the present they are not brought into the Folds; therefore we cannot fay, who are not his Sheep, we cannot fay who are Reprobate; we may know who are Elected, but we cannot know who are Reprobated; we can tell who are his Sheep, but we cannot tell who are not his Sheep: Now they that are his Sheep, that are Converted and brought home to the Folds of Christ, they may be known by these four figns:

First, If thou art a Sheep of Jesus Christ, certainly the Shepherd hath set his mark upon thee, whereby he does know thee, and will own thee at the great day of his appearing, John 10. 14, I am the good Shepherd, and know my Sheep, and am known of mine: I know every one of my Sheep, 2 Tim. 2. 19, The Lord knoweth them that are his: he knows them with a distinguishing knowledg. There are, and will be, at the great and dreadful day of Je us Christ, abundance that will claim acquaintance with Jesus Christ; Oh, what seeking will there be to

find

find his favour at that great day! feeking, and fuing, and crying with tears of blood, for his favour at that day! many will claim acquaintance, and fay, Lord, Lord, Matt. 7.22,23, Have not we prophefied in thy name? have not we heard thee teach in our Synagogues? have not we heard thy Messengers which thou hast sent in thy name, teaching on the Lords day, and on the week-day? nay, have not we fate at thy Table with thee in the use of the Sacrament of thy Body and Blood? to whom the Lord Christ will fay, I know you not, Why? because he does not fee his Mark upon them: nay, they themselves, when their consciences are once awakened, and they begin to look and fearch for the Mark, they cannot find it upon themselves, and therefore they will hear that dreadful sentence, Matth.25, Depart from me ye curfed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

But you will fay, What is this mark whereby Tefus Christ knows his sheep, and whereby they may know that they are his? I answer, This mark is the holy Spirit of God, which he bestows · upon every true believer, I Cor. 6. 17, He that is joyned to the Lord, is one Spirit; that is, he that is united to Christ, hath the same spirit that Christ hath, hath one and the same spirit that Christ hath, Rom. 8.9, Now if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his: If any man have not this mark upon him, the spirit of Christ, our Saviour will never own that man for his. Hence it is the Spirit of God is compared to a Seal or Mark, Ephes. 1.13, After ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise. If thou hast received this mark, this feal of the Spirit of God upon thy foul, thou maift be as fure that thou art one of Christs

heep,

sheep, as if thou didst see thy name written in the Book of Life. I, but here it may be demanded But may not this Seal, or this mark be counterfeited? may not a man be mistaken, and deceived, in thinking he hath this mark, the Spirit of God, when indeed he hath it not? To this I answer; Yes, it is possible for a man to be mistaken; and therefore the Apostle so often presses this duty of Examination. 2 Cor. 13. 5, Examine your selves, whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves : know ye not your own selves that Jesus Christ is in you except you be reprobates? And let every man prove his own works: the work of grace in his heart, let him prove it, Gal. 6.4, Then shall be have rejoycing in himself alone, and not in another: he shall have rejoycing in the testimony of his own conscience, and not in the witness of anothers tongue: therefore we should be examining our hearts, what operations the Spirit of God hath had upon our spirits, whether it hath been an enlightning, a quickning, a convincing, a heart-warming, a fealing, and a healing spirit: certainly the healing and fealingwork of the Spirit goes together, as I have formerly shewed you. Many boast of the Spirit of God; they question not but they have the Spirit of God; but I told you the Spirit of God never fets his feal to a blank; there is first some work of the Spirit of God upon the foul, enlightning, convincing, quickning and drawing the heart to Jesus Christ.

So we should examine the fruits and effects of the Spirit of God upon our souls. Now there are four struits especially whereby a man may know he hath received, not the spirit that is of the world, but the spirit that is of God, 1 Cor. 2. 12, by these four ef-

tects:

First, An unseigned love to the servants of Jesus Christ, that is one essect of the Spirit of God, that proves Jesus Christ hath set his mark upon him that hath it, John 13.35, By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. This is a mark I set upon my sheep. So 1 John 4.7,8,12, Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God: and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God: He that loveth not, knoweth not God. for God is love; And in ver. 12, If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

2. We may know the Spirit of God is bestowed upon us, by constancy in our profession, and stedfastness in the ways of truth: this is one certain mark of the Spirit of God, when a man can hold fast his profession, and that without wavering; can keep close to the truth. How did 70b approve himself to be one that belonged to God? My foot hath held his steps (faith he), his way have I kept, and not declined, Job 23. 11. And how did David prove himself to be one of his sheep? I have chosen the way of truth, and I have stuck unto thy testimonies, Pial. 119.30,3 1. That is a dreadful Scripture in John 2. 9, Who soever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, bath not God. He speaks of transgression in Judgment, in running into corrupt Opinions; and he that abides not in the Doctrine of God, but falls from the Truths of Christ, he hath no part in God.

3. By a zeal for Gods Glory, his Cause, his Truth, especially in evil times. That man that can stand up for God, when others for sake him, and sin against him: that man that can be most zealous in maintaining of Gods Truth, and can say with David in Psalm 69.9, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me

f

h

T

to

tl

W

aı

fa

W

0

th

m

kı

m

up: and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me. And Rfalm 119.158, I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not thy word. By this may we know the Spirit of God is in us.

4. By sympathy and compassion towards our Brethren that are in afflictions and misery: if one member suffer, all the rest of the members suffer with it: when we can ligh in their forrows, and bleed in their wounds, and be affected with their miseries and calamities, as if they were our own. By these effects we may know whether we have received the mark of Christ, that is, the Spirit of Christ. That is the first sign, if you have received the Mark of Christ.

Secondly, If thou be a Sheep of Christ, thou art returned from thy former wandrings, 1 Pet. 2.25, To were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. Canst thou say, there hath been a work of Conversion wrought on thy soul? Once thou wast unprositable, but now art prositable; once thou wert wandring in the wilderness of sin, but now thou art brought home to Jesus Christ: Is there a work of Conversion wrought in thy soul? canst not thou say now, I am not the same man I was, the same woman I was? Certainly if there be a returning from your ways of wandring, and walking in paths of new obedience, and keeping in the Fold of Christ, then you are the Sheep of Christ.

Thirdly, If thou be a Sheep of Jesus Christ, thou mayst know it by thy carriage towards thy Shepherd; if thou art a Sheep of Christ, thou wilt know thy Shepherd, thou wilt know and see so much sweetness, sulness, and all-sufficiency in him,

F

that thou wilt fay, None but Christ, none but Christ: thou wilt count all things but dross and

dung in comparison of Christ.

Thirdly, Thou wilt hear his voice : My fleen hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, John 10. 27. Now to hear the voice of Christ, is to be able to difcern his voice from the voice of strangers. The Spouse was able to discern the voice of her Beloved, Cant. 2. 8, The voice of my Beloved. The great work he was to do, was to work out redemption for me; he was to do and fuffer much, but all could not daunt him; But be comes leaping on the mountains, and skipping on the Then they follow him: Christs sheep have not only the Ear-mark to hear his voice, but also the foot-mark, they follow him whitherfoever he goes: when Christ calls them, they fay, Lo, bere we are. They follow him, by imitating him in his Patience, Meekness, Humility, &c. And if thou wilt study how to be like him, that thou mayst be made more and more conformable to his Image; by thy carriage towards thy Shepherd, thou mayft know if thou art his Sheep, thou wilt know him, hear his voice, follow him, and labour to be made conformable to him.

A fourth mark whereby thou mayst know whe ther thou art a Sheep of Jesus Christ, is this, Thou mayst know it by thy carriage towards the Flock; that is, towards thy fellow Servants, towards those that are the members of Jesus Christ: It is observed of Sheep, that they are the most profitable creatures you can name; so, if thou be a sheep of Jesus Christ, thou wilt not be an unprofitable burthen in thy station, but thou wilt be fruitful in thy place, and profitable to others: 1 Cor. 10. 33,

Even

Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many that they may be sawed. And sheep, as they are profitable, so they are innocent, and harmless creatures, they wrong, they injure none; fo if thou be one of the sheep of Christ, thou wilt be harmless, Phil. 2. 15, That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation. The Greek word for Harmless is there, antegios, which fignifies without Horns, not pushing one another: if you be the sheep of Christ, you will dearly love one another: but if you bite and devour one another, you are Dogs and not Sheep.

Fifthly, Sheep are contented with their Pasture; Oh! if thou be a sheep of Jesus Christ, thou wilt bless God in any state and condition whatsoever thou art in: thou wilt fay, If I have gotten Jesus Christ, no matter how poor, and low, and despi-

cable my condition on earth be.

Sixthly, Sheep usually are united one to another, they go in Flocks and Herds, they do not willingly forfake one another: If thou be a sheep of Christ, thou wilt keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, Ephel. 4. 3. Thou wilt not forlake the affembly of Gods Saints, Heb. 10. 25. Oh my Brethren, you should labour to find these sneep-

marks upon your fouls.

bi

ep

2

ft,

cé

10

zy

O

br

be

be

re

Co

he

28

is

u

be

A

T,

le

e

U

fe

c

le

ep

le

in

37

en

A third Use, it is for Exhortation: If Jesus Christ be the bleffed Shepherd, as you have heard him described, that hath the greatest care, and love, and power, and reward; Oh! what an invitation might this be to every one to come to Jefus Christ, and to stand out no longer! many perswasions have been tendered to you many hundred times

times, and yet some of you never brought home to Jesus Christ to this day: Oh, that this might be that bleffed day wherein Tefus Christ and some wandring sheep may be brought together! Confider who calls thee, it is not a Judg, but a Shepherd; and consider why he calls, not to hurt, but to heal thee? not to kill, but to cure thec; not to punish, but to pity thee; Oh, think therefore with thy felf, that thou hearest the Lord Jesus Christ to use a homely Phrase) as it were, whistling after thee, as he doth in the ministry of his word; fometimes he comes with fecret whisperings: sometimes he comes openly, whiftling, speaking, calling, crying in the ears of finners: Oh, do but think that thou heardst the Lord Tesus Christ calling, and crying after thee, Why wilt thou die, and perish? Why wilt thou be lost when thou mayft have a Saviour? Oh, but fays the poor foul, I fear, I fear, that I am so diseased, and that the Lord Jesus Christ will not look upon me: Remember, that this Shepherd is compared to a Shepherd that hath healing under his wings, Mal. 4. 2,

But fays the foul, I am afraid I have so displeased him, he will never own me: Remember, he is a meek, gentle, and compassionate Saviour. There are two things that make men afraid: and they are, Pride and Fury; these are not in Christ, I am meek and lowly, says he, Matth. 11.29, and fury is not in me. But I am lost, says the poor sheep; Jesus Christ will seek that that is lost; but if I do come, will he certainly own me, and look upon me? I answer, Look upon that comfortable Scripture, Luke 15.4, 5, 6, What man of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the Ninety and nine in the Wilderness, and

go after that which is lost until he find it? and when he bath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoycing; and when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoyce with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. There are three or four things very observable in that Parable, which I would have every poor sinner that is afraid to come to Christ,

to look upon.

ie

1-

)_

it

0

re

us

t-

is

r-

-

0

ft

u

u

d

at

ſ-

ie

ce

m

i

ple

4-

b

0

First, Observe, the Shepherd he leaves ninety and nine in the Wilderness, and goes and seeks after that one sheep that is lost. Observe, if there be but one sheep lost or missing, the Lord Jesus Christ bestows as much pains and care in seeking that one sheep, as if that all the sheep were lost: there was but one sheep missing, yet he hath so much care of that one, that he leaves all the ninety and nine to seek that. The Lord Jesus Christ hath so much care of every one of his sheep, as if he had but one sheep to care for: as the Sun for example would shine upon the world, though there were but one man in it to shine upon: so this blessed Son of righteousness, if but one sheep be lost, he seeks after that one.

Secondly, Observe, the Shepherd there seeks the sheep before ever the sheep seek the Shepherd. The Lord Jesus prevents us with his mercies; we cannot seek him till he first seeks us, Psalm 119. v. last, you have Davids Prayer, I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek thy servant, for I do not for-

get thy commandements.

Thirdly, Observe, when he hath found this sheep, he carries it upon his shoulders, or as the Text tells you, he carries his lambs in his arms, and gathers them in his bosom. Mark this, and let it sink

F 3

into your hearts: never did any man upon earth go to heaven any other way but upon the shoulders of Jesus Christ: never was sheep saved, but only by being embraced in the arms of this blessed Shepherd.

Fourthly, Observe, the Shepherd rejoyceth when he hath found the sheep; he rejoyceth to find this one loft sheep; observe this for thy comfort, thou that art a poor wandring sheep, discouraged from coming to Jesus Christ: observe, the Lord Jefus Christ will be more glad in receiving and entertaining thee, than thou canst be in receiving him. You fee he rejoyceth that he hath found this one lost sheep. Oh therefore be exhorted in Gods fear, to stand out no longer, but you that have not yet closed with Jesus Christ, come to this Shepherd, that whatfoever your dileafes and maladies may be, they may be all removed, and your fouls faved. But may be you will fay, how shall we do to come to this Shepherd, that so we may be faved by him? I answer briefly, That man that would come to Christ, he must resolve :

First, That he will slye out of himself, and renounce all self-considence, and self-excellency, and
self-righteousness: he that would come to Christ,
he must come poor, come in the sense of his own poverty, come like a poor distressed sheep without a
Shepherd; he must come in the sense and feeling of
his own wants and weakness: The Son of man came
to seek and to save that which was lost, Matth. 18.

11. Luke 19. 10. Lost! we are lost by nature;
therefore Christ came to save all? no, that is not
the meaning; but he came to save those that feel
themselves lost: thou must be sensible of thine own
spiritual want; thou must be spiritually poor, or
poor in spirit.

Secondly,

Secondly, Learn to see so much beauty and excellency in him, that thou canst be content to part with any thing for him, any thing that stands in competition with him, or opposition against him; let all go, and say, I would have Jesus Christ what-

ever I part with for his fake.

Again, Be sure you hearken to the voice of Christ, if thou wouldst have him for thy Shepherd, John 10. 4, 5, And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and his own sheep follow him, for they know his voice, and a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers. If thou art a sheep of Jesus Christ, thou wilt learn the voice of Christ, and not be feduced and led away with the error of the wicked, to fall from your own stedfastness. When Theodosius the Emperour desired to have fome conference with Arius the Heretick, the Empress perswaded him not to talk and confer with fuch a Heretick that was fo envious; for, fays the, by hearing of him, you may be perverted by his words, and so infnared in his curfed opinion. This was excellent counsel!

Lastly, You must come to Christ in a way of Obedience; you must take up a resolution to obey this blessed Shepherd. The same Hebrew word, that signifies to seed, signifies to rule; if Christ seed thee in his Pastures, he must rule thee. Unite my heart to thee, that I may fear thy name, Psal. 86.

11. But what would you have me do? Come with a full purpose, and cleave to this Shepherd, and never to leave him. Do as the Disciples of Christ, in John 6.67,68, Then said Jesus unto the Twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words F. 4

of eternal life. Oh that we had such a resolution as Peter had, not only to say so, but to do so, Matt. 26.33, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended: Master, though all fortake thee, yet will we believe in thy name. Thus if you follow this Shepherd, hear, and obey him, then all the sweetness and marrow of this Doctrine belongs to you: The Lord write these things upon our hearts, and draw us nearer and nearer to him, that we may say he seeds us, and cloaths us, and gives us eternal life. So much for the first point of Doctrine drawn from the first part of that, Christs Relation to his People.

the spall yand only to dide plot

disco, 67. Siera fair 700 and the little safe for the little safe for a safe for the little safe for the l

CHRIST'S

CHRIST'S PROVISION

densitio issimilari vii

MARCH STRONG

S

FOR

MANS DIRECTION.

Ifaiah XL. 11.

He shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd: he shall gather his Lambs with his Arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

2. Doct.

Esus Christ in his carriage to his People hath a tender respect to their infirmities. For the proof of this Point, I shall give you but one place of Scripture, and it is so full, that I shall need no more, Ezek,

13 4. 19. It is spoken of our blessed Saviour; says our Saviour, I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick. There are four sorts of Persons mentioned there, that have a great deal of need of Christs care and compassion, and of his tender indulgence towards them.

First, Some there are that are lost Sheep, not fi-

nally, or totally lost, but lost in their own apprehension, in their own sense and seeling, as David complains in Psalm 119. 176, I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Now these, our Blessed Saviour will seek, he will recover them by his Word and Spirit, though in their own apprehensions they think themselves lost, dead, damned, and undone: yet notwithstanding he will seek them, and bring them into his Fold again.

Secondly, Others there are that are driven asway, and that is a further degree of Misery; Satan hath not only gotten them out of the Fold, but when they are got out, they wander more and more, they are driven more and more from Jesus Christ, by Satans subtilty, and his temptations. Now says our Saviour, those which are driven a-

way, I will bring them again.

Thirdly, Some are in a further degree of Mifery, they are broken, broken with discouragements: they are ready to fay, There is no hope, no mercy belongs to fuch finners as they are, and these are in a worse condition than the former; for a sheep may be lost, and driven from the Fold, but if that be all, he may return; but if the sheep have broken a Leg, though he hear the voice of the Shepherd, he cannot help himself, his Leg is broken, and he cannot come at the call of the Shepherd: So some are so broken with discouragements, that though they hear the voice of Christ, they are ready to fay, No mercy belongs to us. Now fays Christ, these will I bind up again, and restore that Comfort that will quiet their hearts, and speak peace to them.

Fourthly, Others are fick, and that is yet a further degree of milery; when a poor sheep doth

not only wander, and is driven away, and hath a broken leg, discouraged with temptations, but hath some kind of sickness of spirit seized on him, so that he saith, his soul abhors all manner of meat, as David describes a man in such a condition: says he, his soul abhors all manner of meat, and they are brought to the very gates of death, Psalm 107, 18. This is the saddest condition of all; but says Christ, these are such that I will strengthen. If you would know the reason why Christ hath such a tender respect to his Peoples infirmities, I will give you these Three:

The First is drawn from that gracious Disposition that is in him: He is a Saviour of a very meek, mild, tender, and compassionate heart; this appears by those Names and Titles that sets forth the sweethess of our Saviours disposition in Scripture; he compares himself to a Father, to a Physician, to a Husband.

To a Father, Heb. 2. 13, It is the speech of Christ, Behold, I, and the Children which God hath

given me.

And again, he compares him to a Physician, Matth. 9. 12, But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole, need not a Physician, but they that be sick.

So likewise to a Husband, Isa. 34. 5, For thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his

name.

Now, of whom should Children expect pity and compassion, but of their Father? as a Father pitieth his own Children, so is the Lord merciful to them that fear him, Psalm 103. 13. And of whom should a Patient expect help, but of the Physician? And of whom should a Wife expect pity, but of her Hus-

band?

band? who knows how to give the Wife the honour of a mild Usage, because he knows she is the weaker Vessel. All these Relations of a Father, a Physician, a Husband, and of a Shepherd, they are most eminently in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is one reason.

Secondly, He hath a tender respect to our infirmities, because he is a Merciful High Priest, toucht with the fense of our infirmities, Heb. 4. 15, For we have not a high Priest which cannot be toucht with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Heb. 2. 18. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. As God speaks to the Jews, Exod. 23.9, Alfo thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the Land of Egypt. So the Lord Christ, he knows the hearts of poor, tempted, broken, bruifed fouls, because he himself was tempted. A Father, you know, because he is acquainted with the distempers of his Child more than a Aranger is, pities his Child more than a stranger doth: So the Lord Christ he knows our frame, he considers our temper, Psalm 103, 13, 24, therefore he pities us more than strangers do. that do not know our tempers; he considers we are but dust, and as the wind that passeth away, therefore he suffers not his whole displeasure to fall upon us, Pfal. 78. 38, 39. That's the fecond reason: he pities us, and hath a tender respect to our infirmities, because he is a merciful High Priest, toucht. with the fense of our infirmities.

Thirdly, The Lord Jesus Christ hath a tender respect to the infirmities of his people, because he loves and likes, and means to cherish the begin-

ings

ings of grace in any one of his poor children : he loves grace, and he likes it, and cherisheth it : he looks more at the good in us, which he means to cherish, than at the bad in us, which he means to abolish: the Lord Christ looks at the very buddings and bloffoms of grace in the foul; those beginnings of grace are precious unto him: therefore he fays of a little grace, as a man fays of a tree that has but one cluster upon it, Do not cut the tree, it hath a bleffing in it, Ifa. 65.8. The Lord Christ will not destroy a cluster of grapes, if there be but one cluster. If there be but one Cherry on a tree, it shews there is some life in the tree; one Cherry upon a tree, it shews there is life as well as if there was twenty Pounds upon it; one Cherry shews that it is a living tree, and a man will not cut down that tree. The Lord Christ will cherish the least beginnings of grace; if there be but a spark of grace in the foul, he will not quench it, but blow it up into a flame. Look as Phylicians deal with difeafed Patients, they do not administer purging Potions according to the greatness of their diftempers, but according to the strength of their Patients : So the Lord Jefus Christ deals with his own children, not according to the difeases and diftempers that are in them, not according to the difterpers of their fins, but according to the measure of their strength; he will not lay on them more than he will give them frength to bear These are the reafons of the point and and an one good as have

Before I come to the Application of the point, Because this is Childrens bread, and Dogs are ready to match at it, that yet have no right to it: therefore for the explication of the point, there are these three Quaries that would be satisfied : First,

What

What an Infirmity is Secondly, What are the causes of those Infirmities. Thirdly, What are the figns

and fymptoms of those Infirmities.

First, What an Infirmity is. An infirmity (briefly) in the foul, is this; Some fickness or indisposition of the foul, that arises from the weakness of grace. Or an Infirmity is this, When the purpose and inclination of the heart is upright, but a man wants Arength to perform that purpose; when the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak, Matth. 26.41. when a man can fay with the Apostle, To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not, Rom. 7. 18. When the bent and inclination of the foul is right; but either through fome violence of corruption, or ftrength of temptation, a man is diverted and turned out of the way. As the needle in the Seamans Compass, you know if it be right, it will stand always Northward, and the bent of it will be towards the North-Pole; being jogged and troubled, it may sometimes be put out of frame and order, yet the bent and inclination of it is still Northward. This is an infirmity. That's the first.

Secondly, What are the causes of these Infirmities? there are divers causes you must know of our

infirmities : as,

First, An infirmity may arise from want of age, for want of time to gather strength. The Lord Christ you must know hath Lambs in his Fold as well as Sheep, and he hath plants in his Orchard as well as stronger Trees, and Babes as well as strong Men. Now says the Apostle, I write to you Babes and little Children, because your sins are pardoned for his name-sake, 1 John 2. 12. Observe there, that remission of sin is bestowed not only upon

young men, that are strong to resist temptations, not only upon aged men, that are well experienced in the ways of grace, but it is bestowed even upon Babes: I write unto you little Children, because your sins are pardoned for his name-sake.

Secondly, Our infirmities may arise also from a want of the means of grace, either when men want milk, or the sincere milk of the word, 1 Pst. 2. 2,

or have but little of it.

Thirdly, Infirmities may arise from some secret corruption that was undiscovered in our first conversion: This may be an occasion of an infirmity; for that may both weaken the soul, and exceeding-

ly distemper and disquiet it.

Fourthly, Our infirmities may arise from forfaking found and folid truths, and disquieting our thoughts with doubtful disputations, as the Apostle calls them, Ram. 14. 1, when men trouble their heads with trifles, or with matters of less moment, and in the mean while neglect the marrow of Religion; even as little Children, that forsake wholiome food, and feed on green apples, and so put their bodies into distempers.

Fifthly, Our infirmities may arise from this, when our affections are too much carried out after the World, and the things of the World; for certainitis, look how much the soul is carried out after the world, so much the weaker it is: the stronger our love to the world is, the weaker is our love to Jesus Christ, and to grace, and spiritual things.

Sixthly, Our infirmities may arise from the not right ordering of our company; dead company, dead and barren company many times make dead

and barren hearts.

Seventhly, Our infirmities may arise from our losing

losing our first love, remitting of the zeal, and intention, and forwardness, that once we had in the ways of grace: when we grow loose and slothful in the service of our God, and do not stir up the grace of God that is in us, 2 Tim. 1.6. Exercise you know encreaseth strength; but want of exercise many times occasions weakness: When a man prays coldly, hears the word of God coldly, communicates at the Lords Table coldly: The more coldness there is in the performance of the Duties of Religion, the more weakness there will be in the soul. These are the causes of our infirmities.

Thirdly, It may be demanded, What are the figns and fymptoms of an Infirmity? (briefly) I

shall give you these four.

First, Where there are infirmities, there is spiritual life, though there be want of spiritual ftrength: this is a certain fign of an infirmity. You know there is a great deal of difference between a dead man and a weak man; a dead man that hath not life, and a weak man that hath life, and wants ftrength. It cannot be faid of any wicked man that he is a weak man, but he is a dead man: neither can it be faid that he does any thing weakly, but he does it wickedly. Observe what our Saviour speaks of a bruised reed, he speaks of it as a thing that yet hath some life in it: for a reed, though it be exceeding weak, that it is shaken with every wind, yet by the fide of the water it grows, it hath life in it. Make this fure to thy felf, that thou hast life in thee, or else the comfort of this Doctrine cannot belong to thee; if so be thou hast life in thee, though thy Grace be weak, yet if thou hast life, it is but an infirmity. But you will fay, How may I know I have life in me? I answer. You may know it thus. Firft.

First, Thou mayst know it by thy spiritual feeling; thou wilt feel what hurts thee; thou wilt feel sin to be a great burthen, and thou wilt groan under it, and thou wilt bemoan thy self like E-phraim, Fer. 31. 18, I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a Bullock unaccustomed to the yoak; turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God: surely after that I was turned, I repented: and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.

Secondly, Thou mayst know it by that spiritual strife, and combat, and conflict that is in thee: certainly there will be a conflict in thy soul, because there are two contrary principles there; put water to water, or fire to fire, and there is no conflict; but put water and fire together, and there will be a great conflict: So corruption will not strive with corruption; but where there is Grace and corruption in one soul, there will be a combat and conslict, the Flesh will lust against the Spirit, and

the Spirit against the Flesh, Gal. 5. 17.

Thirdly, Thou mayst know thou hast life in thee by thy spiritual crying; thou wilt cry out for deliverance from danger and evil: O wretched main that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! Thou wilt make this the chief subject of thy suit and supplication to God, from day to day: O, that once I might be freed from a base whorish, backsiding-heart; that continually is departing from God.

Fourthly, If thou halt life; certainly that grace thou halt, though it be but weak, though it be but

little, though it be but as a spark, yet it shall prevail against corruption; for wherever the Lord Christ enters into the soul to dwell, there he comes like a Conquerour, and he brings forth Judgment unto victory, Matth. 12.20. That is, his Government shall be victorious over all the opposition of fin and Satan: Grace, like oyl, will be uppermost: if there be but a spark of Grace in thy heart, it shall not be quenched, but it shall rather increase more and more, and at last shall grow up into a flame, as the fire of the Lord that came upon Elijabs offering, 1 Kings 18. 38, consumed the burntfacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. Grace is a fire that comes down from Heaven; though there be but a little spark of it at first, yet by little and little it will lick up all the water of our corruptions, and confume our fins; Grace will grow stronger and stronger, and corruption weaker and weaker. That is the first symptom of an infirmity. If there be spiritual life in the soul; but if there be not spiritual life, there is no infirmity.

Secondly, The second Sign or Symptom of an infirmity, is this, That may be said to be an infirmity, when some particular action crosses the main intention of the heart; If thine eye be single, if thy heart be upright, if the Byas and bent of thy soul be towards God, then all the obliquity, or all the swervings in thy life, are but lookt upon as infirmities: For example, A good Archer that is handling his Bow, may-be his eye is right, and his aim is right, but through the weakness of his hand, or the distemper of his Bow, he may miss the Mark, that is an infirmity; So here, if thy eye be right

towards Gods Commandments: if thy intention be to please God, if the bent and byas of thy foul be God-ward, not fin-ward, then all the rest of the obliquity, or fwervings that are in thy actions, are lookt upon but as infirmities: As a Traveller, for example, in his journey; if he fet his face the right way, and he be enquiring the way, and willing to follow the way; or if, when he goeth out of the way, he check himself, though he may miss of the way through ignorance, or may be feduced by some that told him wrong; yet that may be faid to be but an infirmity: So here, when thou canst fet thy face towards Heaven, as the children of Israel and Judab are described, Fer. 50. 5, They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward; saying, Come let us joyn our selves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant that shall not be forgotten. When a man thus fets his face towards Heaven, then his wandrings out of the way (if they be beside the intention of his purpose and mind) are lookt upon but as infirmities; David was out of his way, when in a fury he would be avenged on Nabal for his churlishness; when he faid, God do so to me, and more also, if I cut not off Nabal, and every one that belongs to his Family; yet when Abigail, a wife Woman, comes and tells him, he was out of his way, how glad was he? and stops his course, and faid, Bleffed be the Lord God of Israel which sent thee this day to meet me; and bleffed be thy advice, and bleffed be thou which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging my self with my own hand, 1 Sam. 25. 32, 33. See the difference between the fin of Judas, and the fin of Peter; Judas you know, he finned with deliberation, and his intention was flatk

n

n

if

y

r

as is

is d,

k,

ht

0-

stark naught; his intention and purpose of betraying his Mafter, was to inrich himself; he was a Thief, and nibled money out of his Masters Bag, therefore his intention was naught. But on the contrary, look on Peter, when he thrice denved his Master, it was a great fin too, but it was without his intention or purpose; certainly Peter had no intention at all to deny his Master; but it fared with him, as a man that is writing with his Pen in his hand, and writing a straight Line, but it may be fome body comes and joggs him on the Elbow, so he makes a crooked line against his will: Or as a man that is shooting at a Mark, but some body comes and joggs his Elbow, and makes his Arrow to go awry; thus was it with Peter: This is the fecond Sign or Symptome of an infir-

mity.

Thirdly, That is an Infirmity, when a mans judgment is kept found and upright, that he does not approve of any fin, when no fin hath any allowance or approbation in his heart; this was the fruit of John Baptist his Preaching, Isa. 40.4, Every Valley shall be exalted, and every Mountain and Hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: that is, those that are converted by John Baptists preaching, they would not look on crooked things as plain, or plain things as crooked; that is, they would not defend, or justifie themselves in fin, but look upon fin as fin, and duty as duty; and they would not look upon the ways of God as crooked, but straight: they were indeed crooked to them before, because their judgment was not found; but now they look upon them as straight, and all his ways to be equal ways. A child of God will be fure to commend that

that duty which yet he cannot practife; and he will be fure to condemn that fin into which yet he often slips and falls, and that because his judgment is right; duty will be duty in his eye, and sin will be fin in his eye, though through infirmity he

may fail in the one, and fall into the other.

Fourthly, He that fins through infirmity, will still keep his conjugal love to Jesus Christ; and although fome failings in him may work a kind of estrangement between Christ and his foul; yet notwithstanding his heart will still cleave to the Lord Tesus Christ; and this appears thus: Because he will chuse no other Husband, he will chuse no other Saviour for all this; but he would rejoyce with all his heart, if he might be but reconciled to Jefus Christ; though there hath been some unkindness between Christ and him, He fays, I will return to my first Husband, for then was it better with me than now, Hof. 2. 7. and he is grieved for the unevenness of his carriage towards so sweet a Husband rs he hath been to him. If there be fuch a disposition in you, to hold fast your conjugal love to Jesus Christ, and still keep close to him, though there may be some unkindness, yet thou pitchest on no other Husband; certainly, this is but an infirmity. But fays the poor foul, Can that be an infirmity, that cleaves to me all my days? that I have been vext and perplext with, twenty, thirty years together?

I answer, Possibly there may be such insirmities cleave to Gods children: As for example, some deadness in duties, dulness and deadness in hearing the Word; it may be slipperiness of memory, or forgetfulness of the words we have heard; or it may be some strong corruption, which is like

n

t

a thorn in the flesh, which the Lord Jesus hath lest in thee, to humble thee, and to make thee base in thy own eyes, all thy days: But it may be then you will object, and say, How then will this stand with the Doctrine you delivered even now? you made it a mark or token of spiritual life, That Grace will prevail against corruption; that the Government of the Lord Jesus Christ would be victorious?

I answer, True Grace will be victorious at last, but I do not say, it will be all at once, but it will be by degrees; and it is some kind of victory and conquest over corruption, when it is subdued, though it be not quite extinguished; if it be weakned and abated, though it be not destroyed; when a man can feelingly cry out of it, as the Apostle did, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death! and he breaks out, and says, thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ, Rom. 7.25.

Secondly, I answer: God sometimes works by contraries; God is carrying on the work of Grace in his Children, when corruptions feem to be thriving and growing; when God means to give his Children victory, he suffers them to be foyled first; the work of Grace in the heart fometimes goes backwards, that it may go forwards: As the Seed that is fown in the Field, it rots in the ground before it springs and grows: Sometimes you must know, that God will strengthen us by our very flippings; he will have us learn to stand by our very falls and bruises; he will have us to be strengthened by our weaknesses and infirmities; he will have us to be deep-rooted by our shakings: Our infirmities are the keepers of our Graces; it makes us look more carefully to our own standings; it is good

good therefore to observe the methods and manner of Gods dealing with our fouls, and to learn to live by faith; be acting of faith in the business of our infirmities; for as I have often told you, The life of faith is in the use of faith; so much as we use faith, fo much we live by it; it is good for a man to live by faith in point of his infirmities; and to fay, when I am foyled, I shall have victory, when I fall, I shall arise; when I am weak, I am strong, as the Church said, Micah 7.8, Rejoyce not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise: when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. Thus you have the explication of the point, what an Infirmity is, and what are the causes of it, and what are the signs and symptoms of it. For the use of the point: 1. For Consolation. 2. For Caution. 3. For Exhortation.

First, For Consolation, because that is the principal use of the Text: And O, that I could speak not only to the ears, but to the heart of any poor doubting, drooping, dejected soul: O that this Doctrine might be as a box of ointment, to comfort such an one, to refresh him; O that I could but drop in some Consolation into any poor bruised soul that hears me this day, that such an one might lift up those hands that hang down, and feeble

knees that tremble, Isa. 35.3.

And this is the comfort I have to tender to thee, That the Lord will not reject thee for an infirmity: He carries his Lambs in his Arms, and gathers them in his bosom; poor weak ones, he carries them in his bosom, when it may be the Leg is broken, and they are not able to go; he gently leads those with young, in all their fears, doubts, and disquietments about their Condition; he hath a tender care of

his Lumbs, of his weak ones: If thou art but one of Christs Lambs, know thus much for thy comfort, that he hath a care of the poorest Lamb that is in his Flock; if thou art a Plant in his Vineyard, know, that he hath a care of the tenderest Plant; never was it known, that a merciful and compassionate Father, cast off a child because of his weakness: many times, it may be, when the child is fo fick and weak, that it is not able to speak, but only to say, Father; it may be it cannot speak out; then the Bowels of the Father yearns towards him the more; the weaker the child is, and unable to speak, the more his compassions are rowling towards him; O let not our unbelief make Jesus Christ unnatural; Do we think that Jefus Christ has less compassion toward his Lambs than Jacob had? Jacob was fuch a Shepherd that he had fuch a tender care of his Lambs, that, fays he, if you over-drive the flocks, the lambs will die : and do you think that Jesus Christ is less follicitous for the good of his? But alas! fays the poor foul, my infirmities discourage me, they weaken my affurance, and rob me of my peace and comfort. I answer: true it is, infirmities do fo, but they should not do fo; and that they may not do fo, take these three or four Considerations.

Eirst, Consider, in every infirmity, as there is something against God, so there is something also from God: There is something against God, that is true, because our infirmities are not suitable to the holiness and strictness of his Law; and therefore we should strive against them with prayer, and care and watchfulness. But as there is something against God, so there is something also from God: It may be he lets loose those infirmities upon thee, even like a Messenger of Satan, to bustet thee, to

humble

humble thee, to prove thee, and to teach thee to prife Jefus Christ so much the more. It may be God lets loofe these infirmities, as the avenger of blood was let loofe upon the man flayer, to force the man flayer to fly to the City of Refuge, Numb. 35; fo these infirmities are let loose to force thee to fly to Jesus Christ the Refuge of thy foul. Some there are, that was it not for strong infirmities cleaving to them, strong temptations meeting with them, would never be beholding to Jesus Christ at all: Look therefore in every infirmity, not only at the evil of it, but at the good God intends by it; it may be God intends good to thy foul by them: Whereas we, as he faid once, many times make plaisters to become a poyson, the Lord is able on the contrary to make a plaister of poyson: We many times bring fin out of Grace: God can bring grace out of fin: he can bring Heaven out of Hell: therefore as there is fomething against God, so there is fomething from God in our infirmities: therefore we should not be discouraged because of them.

Secondly, Consider the great difference between thy self when thou wast in a state of nature, and now when thou art a weak Christian, and subject to infirmities; did not God reject thee at that time, and cast thee off, when thou wast an open Traitor and Rebel, marching on in a course of rebellion against him? did he not cast thee off, but had compassion on thee, and did pity thee, and spare thee? then certainly he will not now cast thee off for some unvoluntary errour, which thou bewailest, and mournest for in his presence: Did the Lord seek thee at that time when thou despiseds him? certainly then, he will not despise thee when thou seekest him. That is a good argument of the Apostle,

to strengthen, and support, and comfort drooping spirits, Rom. 5. 10, For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life: Certainly therefore God will not reject thee for an infirmity, if he was so gracious to thee in thy state of sin and enmity to him: there is as great a difference between a state of grace and a state of nature, as there is between Heaven and Hell, though grace be never so weak, and impersed.

Thirdly, Consider the great danger of being pluckt away from Jesus Christ, by giving too much way to despondency: Satans main drift, and great plot is, to drive thee away from Jesus Christ by thy infirmities; he labours to bring thee to despond and despair, and to say there is no hope for thee; because Satan knows, the more he draws thee from Jesus Christ, the weaker thou wilt be: Thy infirmities should not drive thee from Christ, but they should drive thee to Christ, to improve and make use of his gracious disposition, in helping and hea-

ling thee in thy miseries and distresses.

Fourthly, Consider what may be the causes of thy infirmities; those infirmities will be cured in the causes. For example, if thy infirmities arise from want of age, or time to gather strength, that will be cured; because the path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day, Prov. 4. 18. Or if from want of the means of grace, or because the means of grace thou enjoyest are not such as others enjoy; the Lord in such cases will have a tender respect to thee, and measure to thee, not according to what thou halt, but according to what thou wouldst have. Again, if thy infirmities arise from some corruption, that

was not discovered to thee at thy first conversion. thou must then pray, and beg, that the Lord would discover thy felf to thy felf more and more. Again, if thou haft forfaken some old truths of God, and art grown weary of them, and hankerest after Novelties, and new Opinions; then return from thy wandrings, and prize folid meat above kickshaws; beg that thy foul may tafte once again the fweetness of Gospel-truths. In a word, what ever the cause of your infirmities be, get the disease healed in the cause, get thy heart more weaned from the World, and stir up thy self to take hold of God; remember thy former zeal, and repent and do thy first works; and this is the way to get thy infirmities healed. That's the first Use, a Use of Comfort and Consolation.

The fecond Use, is a Use of Caution; The Lord Jesus Christ, as you have heard, hath a tender refpect to his people, a tender care of his people, in respect of their infirmities: let not a wicked man then apply this to himself, and fay, the Lord Christ will have a tender respect to me that go on in the course of sin, that live in sin, and lye in sin, and sleep in fin, and wallow in fin: No, for there is a great deal of difference between the weakness of a Lamb. and the wickedness of a Wolf; the Lord Jesus Christ pities his Lambs for their weakness, but he doth not pity a Wolf for his wickedness; that is, that man who is refolved to go on in a course of fin, fay a Minister what he can to the contrary, if he is dead in trespasses and fins, if he hath no spiritual life in him, if there be no work of grace begun in him, all that I have faid concerning Christs tender care of his peoples infirmities, doth not belong to him, he hath no part in this Inheritance; if thou beeft

beeft a Wolf, and not a Lamb, the Lord Christ that hath a tender care of his Lambs, will be fure to meet thee, not as a Shepherd that carries his Lambs in his Arms, but he will meet thee as a Lion, Hosea 13. 7, 8, Therefore I will be unto them as a Lyon, as a Leopard by the way will I observe them: I will meet them as a Bear that is bereaved of her Whelps, and I will rent the caul of their heart, and there will I devous them like a Lyon, the wild beasts shall tear them. The same Christ that is a Shepherd to his People, he knows how to be a Lyon, a Leopard, and a Bear to his Enemies. That is an awakening Scripture, Pfalm 68. 21, But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses. If therefore thou art one that goest on in thy trespasses, in an unreformed course; if thou livest in fin, and fettest thy heart on wickedness, and takest pleasure therein, this doctrine doth not belong to thee, thou art not a Lamb in Christs account, he will not deal tenderly with thee; nay, he will deal most roughly with thee, his wrath and fury will be powred out upon thee, as the Prophet speaks. That's the second Use, of Caution.

Lastly, A word of Exhortation: If the Lord Jefus Christ hath such a tender respect in his carriage
to the infirmities of his People; O then resolve to
have no other Master but the Lord Jesus Christ; be
under the conduct of no other Shepherd, but only
this; O hear him, fear him, and follow him; follow him whithersoever he goes; follow him, how?
by depending on him for direction, by cleaving
to him in heart, and life; follow him by imitation;
follow him by hearkning to his voice; follow him
by being ruled by him, as before you are directed;

feeing

feeing he is the Lord over his own House, let him Rule in his House, let thy soul be his Temple, wherein he may delight to dwell; say, Lord, Rule in me as thou pleasest, so I may but be thine. Happy are they that are under the Government of Jesus Christ; happy are they that submit themselves to his Guidance and Direction, to his Law; and his Spirit; certainly, such shall find him a merciful, a meek, a compassionate, a tender-hearted Saviour, who gathers his Lambs in his Arms, and carries them in his Bosom, and gently leads those that are with young.

Walking

Walking in Christ, the Mark of our Receiving of Christ.

Coloff. II. 6.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

HE holy Apostle having instructed these Colossians in the Doctrine of Christ in the foregoing Chapter, arms them against Seducers, and salse Teachers, that would have corrupted that Doctrine, in this

fecond Chapter: It is not enough for Ministers to give wholsome food unto their people, but they must also give them Antidotes against the poyson of corrupt Doctrines: It is not enough for Ministers to feed their people, but they must also sence their people against Wolves that would devour the flock. Thus does the holy Apostle here, he forewarns these Colossians, and so fore-arms them against those Seducers that would beguile them with Philosophy, with legal Ceremonies, and worshipping of Angels, and other such corrupt Doctrines mentioned here in this second Chapter. To that end he lays down this weighty rule for them to observe,

observe, As ye have therefore received the Lord

Christ, so walk ye in him.

In the Text you may take notice of two things: First, You have here a holy Rule prescribed in these words, As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord: Secondly, a Practice answering that Rule

here enjoyned; so also walk ye in him.

As ye have. The words will admit of a twofold interpretation: Either take the fense thus; As you have received the Doctrine of Christ by Epaphras, who was a faithful Minister of Christ, Chap. 1, 7; fo do you persevere in that Doctrine, and live according to it: this is the usual interpretation given of the words. Or else they may be taken in this sense; As you have received the Lord Christ, that is, as you have received him into your hearts by faith, who is the way to eternal life; fo walk ye in him: And as you have received grace from Christ, so accordingly act that grace that you have received: this is the interpretation that some give; I shall stick rather to this latter interpretation in the handling of this Text. Many Doctrines may be gathered from this verse; but because my purpose is to dispatch it in one Sermon, as looking upon it as a seasonable Text, a suitable Subject for a day wherein we have been partakers of the precious Ordinance of the Lords Supper, I will name but two or three Doctrines, and pitch upon the principal.

First, As you have received Christ Jesus.

Observe: Where the Gospel is rightly received, Jesus Christ is also received with it. Mark, the Apostle does not say, As you have received the Doctrine of Christ, but Christ himself; he that rightly receives the Doctrine of Christ, receives Christ

him-

himself. Oh then, in how high reverence and estreem should we have the Gospel! and what a prodigious sin are they guilty of, that tread the precious Gospel under foot! what a dreadful account have they to give! 2 Thes. 1.7, 8, When the Lord Fesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty Angels in slaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Fesus Christ.

Secondly, As you have received Christ Jesus the

Lord.

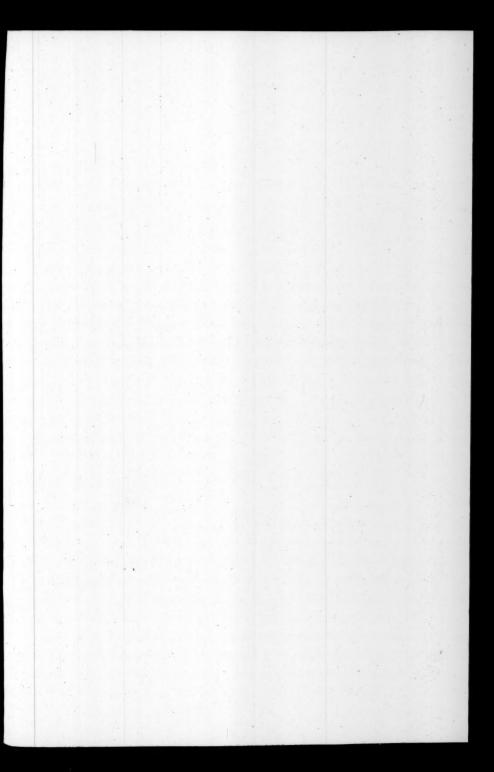
Mark: It is not enough to receive Jesus Christ as a Saviour, but he must be received as a Lord, as a Ruler also; according to the tenour of my last Text, Acts 5.31, Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins: Jesus Christ will be a Saviour to none but those to whom he is a Prince. Bishop Davenant in his Commentary upon the Colossians, says, the sale Apostles preacht Christ, and their Disciples likewise received Christ, but neither did the sale Apostles preach him, nor their Disciples receive him as Lord; but they received him as a sellow-Servant with Moses: therefore says the Apostle, if you receive Christ rightly, you must receive him as a Lord.

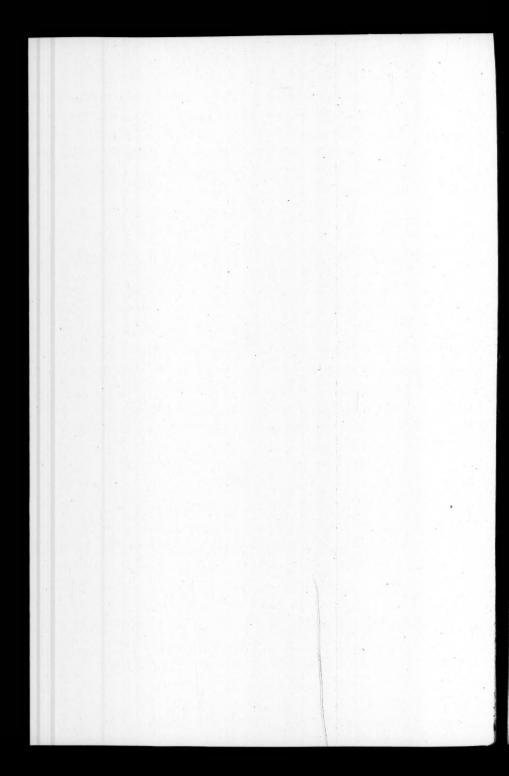
Thirdly, Here I might observe, (Walk ye in him) That Christ is the way, the living way, the only way

wherein we should walk.

The fourth and last Doctrine is that which will comprise the marrow of the Text, and it is this; That it is not enough for a Christian to receive Christ, but he must also walk in Christ.

That you may understand the Doctrine aright, let me open the terms to you. There is a two-fold





receiving of Christ, an habitual and a gradual re-

reiving of him.

First, There is an habitual receiving of Christ; of this speaks the Apostle, 1 Joh. 12, To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.

But then fecondly, There is a gradual receiving of him; and of this speaks the Apostle in this Chapter, Col. 2.19, And not holding the head, from which all the body by joynts and bands having nourishment ministred, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. The whole body, that is the Church of God, and every Member; being knit to the head, that is, to Jesus Christ; having nourishment Supplied from the head, fo the Members of Christ being supplied with nourishment from God, intreate with the increase of God. Observe, There is never a Member of Christ but is a growing Member : there is a gradual receiving of Christ, a reeciving him more and more, by degrees; as well as an habitual receiving of him. If you ask me, What is the difference between these two receivings of. Christ, the habitual and gradual? I answer, the difference lies in two things:

First, The habitual receiving of Christ, is done but once; the gradual is done often. The habitual receiving of Christ is done but once, as the Child is born into the World but once; but it must be nourished and fed every day: so we are spiritually born, or regenerated but once; but we must be nourished, and we must likewise increase and grow in and up to Christ daily; we must grow up to him, as the Apostle phrases it, grow up into him more

and more, Eph. 4: 15:

Secondly, In the habitual receiving of Christ, we

are meerly passive; a man does no more to his own regeneration, than a dead man can do to his own refurrection. But in the gradual receiving of Christ, we are active, we are co-workers with God, 2 Cor. 6. 1, as the Apostle speaks; we move towards him. when we are moved by him. The child before it is born, hath no nourishment but what it receives from the Mother; but when the child is born, then it hath a nutritive faculty, and is able to feed and nourish it self. So in the first work of conversion, we are meerly passive, and do nothing at all, but receive all from Christ, and do nothing in the carrying on the work of our falvation: But when once we have received a life from Christ, then we may act and exercise that life for our own good, and the glory of God. Now of both these receivings of Jefus Christ, does the Apostle speak, both of the habitual and gradual receiving of him: As you have received Christ Fesus the Lord, so walk in him. Walking is an active motion; and when the Apostle says, Walk in him, it is as if he should fay, As you have received the truth of grace, fo also be acting of your grace to the glory of Christ. So then, this is the meaning of the Doctrine; when I fay, it is not enough for a Christian to receive Christ, but he must also walk in Christ: the meaning of the Do-Arine is this, It is not enough for a Christian to receive grace from Christ, but he must be also acting his grace. For the proof of this truth, let me give you two remarkable Scriptures, 2 Tim. 1.6, Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God that is in thee. I know the Apostle speaks of the Ministerial gift; but it is as true of the work of grace; for the Greek word xdpioua, fignifies grace, as well as gift; Stir up the grace of God

in thee. Mark the phrase, it is a remarkable phrase; for in the original it is to blow up thy grace, Avaloruper, just as a man blows up a fire that grows dull, or is hid under the ashes; blow up the grace of God in thee. The other Scripture which is parallel to this, is that Text, Gal. 5. 25, If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit; that is, if we have received a spiritual life, or influence from Christ, let us walk in the spirit, that is, let us act that spiritual life that we have received by the operation of grace: If we have received the life of grace, let us also act the life of grace. For the better explication of this point, two things are to be briefly unfolded.

First, What is required of a Christian that he may act his grace, that he may walk in Christ?

Secondly, Why must a Christian that hath re-

ceived grace, be acting his grace?

First, What is required of a Christian, that he may be acting of his grace? In answer to this, I

shall lay down these five Propositions:

First, No man can act that grace he hath received, by his own strength, without the help and affiftance of Jesus Christ, I Cor. 15. 10, But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me : He does not fay, the grace of God which was in me, that habitual grace which I had; but the grace of God which was with me. So then, it is not the strength of habitual grace that carries a man through any duty, but the auxiliary, the affifting the concurring grace of Jesus Christ; it is his grace with us, more than his grace in us: And fays our Saviour, speaking to his H 2

his Disciples, Without me ye can do nothing, John 15.5. Ye that are my Disciples, ye that have the fpirit of grace, without me ye can do nothing. The habit of grace, the acting of grace, and the perfe-Eting of grace, are all from Jesus Christ: If we cannot put forth a natural action without him, for in him we live, move, and have our being, Acts 17. 28, how much more can we perform a spiritual aft in a spiritual manner without him? Phil. 2.13, fays the Apostle, For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure. Yet take this caution with you, When I fay a man cannot act his own grace, by his own ftrength; you must not therefore be lazy, and fay, I can do nothing without Christ; for you must know, the Lord Christ works grace in us, by fetting those faculties that are in us on work; though we cannot work by our own strength, yet we must be co-workers with Christ: fays the Apostle, Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure, Phil. 2. 12, 13. That which some persons make an argument of laziness, We will do nothing, say they, in the business of Salvation, for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do: The Apostle makes it rather an argument of diligence; Nay therefore, be you working as well as God; though it is God that works in you both to will and to do, yet do you work out your falvation; if you put forth your strength to the utmost, he will help you: That's the first Proposition.

Secondly, Another Proposition is this, It is not enough to act one Grace, but Christians must be acting every grace; for all graces proceed from the same fountain: We receive from Christs fulness,

the mark of our receiving of Christ. 101

and grace for grace, John 1. 16. Jesus Christ is the fountain of all grace, Col. 1. 19, It pleaseth the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. We must draw water from no other Fountain: you must not look on Faith as a distinct habit; or Love, or Repentance, as a distinct habit; as it these were several branches, proceeding from several roots, they all proceed from one and the same root: Faith is a habit of grace closing with Christ, Repentance is a habit of grace, receiving Christ; Love is a habit of grace renewing and fitting the soul to receive Christ; they all proceed therefore from one and the same root, and every grace must be acted.

Thirdly, The third Proposition is this; It is not enough to act grace one way; but Christians must act grace every way: we must not only act grace invisibly, and inwardly, in reference to God; but we must act grace outwardly, and visibly, in reference to men. This is that our Saviour speaks of, Let your light so shine before men; he speaks of the light of grace, Mat. 5.16, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, & glorise your Father which is in heaven: and says the Apostle, James 2.18, Shew me thy faith by thy works.

Fourthly, There are certain feasons wherein grace must be especially acted, as there are certain seasons of the year; in Spring you have buds and blossoms: in Summer you have fruits green, and growing: in the Autumn you have the same fruits ripe, and ready to be eaten; Every thing is beautiful in its season, Eccles. 3. 11, He hath made every thing beautiful in his time; so every grace is beautifully acted, when it is seasonably acted.

Fifthly, He that hath the least measure of grace, must not be discouraged, but must be acting it still.

l 3 that

that in the exercise of it it may be increased; nay certainly, a man that hath but one Talent, Mat.23.

15, that is, but a little measure of grace, and doth act it well, he shall have more comfort a great deal, than he that hath five Talents, and doth not wisely act them. Thus you see the first thing opened, what is required of a Christian that he may rightly act his grace?

The second thing for explication, is; But why must Christians thus be acting of their graces? Let me

give you these four reasons.

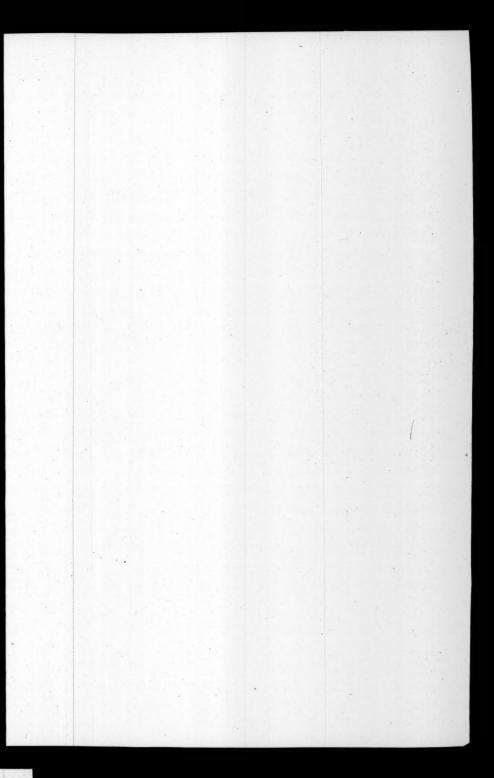
First, The acting of grace will be a certain evidence of the truth of grace: there is no more certain evidence of the truth of grace, than the acting of grace: it may be there are some poor souls that hear me, that will be ready to fay, O what would I give, that I might but have a certain and infallible evidence of the truth of grace, though it were but as a grain of Mustard-seed; that I could but say, that I have true faith, and true repentance, and true love to Jesus Christ; had I an assurance that it were in truth, what would I give! I will tell thee for thy comfort, Here is a rule in the Text, If thou walk in Jesus Christ, that is, if thou be acting that little grace thou hast received, it is a certain token of the truth of it. A painted fire will not warm a man: a painted Cow will give no milk, a painted Horfe will not move, a painted Tree will not grow; fo here, a painted Christian, a counterfeit Christian, a Hypocrite, counterfeit grace will never grow; a counterfeit Christian is always a dead and barren Christian; but if thou art a fruitful Christian, it is a token that grace that thou haft, is grace in truth, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7, 8, And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue;

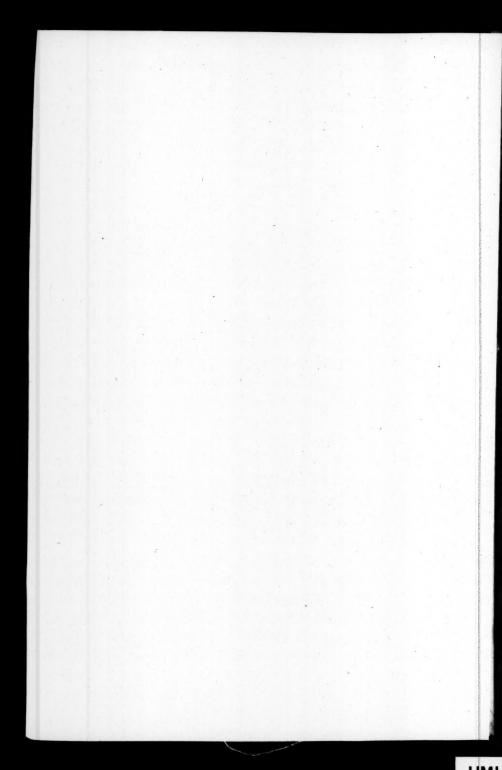
and to virtue knowledg, and to knowledg temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godlines, and to godline s brotherly-kindne s, and to brotherlykindness charity; for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledg of our Lord Jesus Christ: when a man is acting of his grace, he is adding to his grace: add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledg, &c. When a man is acting of his grace, then he is not barren, nor unfruitful: when these two go together, then may a man be confident that he is a real Christian, a Disciple indeed, and not a Disciple in name only. There are these two special properties of grace, the acting of grace, and the growth of grace; and you have them both in that place, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7, 8: the activity of grace, when a man is not barren nor unfruitful in the knowledg of our Lord Jesus Christ: And the growth of grace, when a man adds to his faith virtue, to virtue knowledg, to knowledg temperance, to temperance patience, &c. Compare these two places of Scripture together, Gal. 6. 15, with Gal. 5.6. In Gal. 6. 15, fays the Apostle, For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new Creature: compare that with Gal. 5.6, For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love. In the former place, namely Gal. 6.15, but a new creature: there the Apostle speaks of the habit of grace, in the latter, namely Gal. 5. 6, but faith which worketh by love, there he speaks of the activity of grace: when the habit of grace is turned into the activity of grace, when faith worketh by love, that is a token of true grace indeed.

A fecond reason is this, The more you act your graces,

graces, the more you shall encrease them. Tradefmen know, the more they trade with their Stock, the more they increase their Stock: Grace is like the Widows oyl, the more it is poured out, the more it is increased, 2 Kings 4. 6. Nay, there is a promise made to that man that doth well use his grace, Matth. 25. 29, For unto every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance; which place must be rightly understood; our Saviour speaks there of gifts of the same kind, and same order; otherwife we will run into the Pelagian and Arminian opinion, which is, That the well-using of the gifts of nature, will merit the gifts of grace; fo the Arminian would have the meaning of the words to be; he that well uses the gifts of nature, to him shall be given the gifts of grace. Our Saviour there peaks no fuch matter; but he speaks thus, he that hath faving-grace, shall have more faving-grace: that man that hath faving-grace, by well-using of it, shall have more faving-grace: as a man, the more he plays upon an Instrument, the more dextrous he grows, the more cunning and skilful he will be: So here, the more you act your graces, the more a great deal shall you increase them: to him that hath, shall be given; and he shall have abundance.

Thirdly, A third reason is this, Because God hath given grace for that very end, that it may be acted: If God hath given thee grace, it is not that thou shouldst hide it, like a Candle under a Bushel; nor for thee to put in a dark Lanthorn; but that thou shouldst set it upon a Table for the advantage and benefit of others: But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to prosit withal, I Cor. 12, 17. And in I Pet. 4. 10, As every man hath received the gift, even so winister the same one to another, as good stewards





the mark of our receiving of Christ. 105

stewards of the manifold grace of God. And why are we faid to be Stewards of the manifold grace of God? because we should be dispensing them, as Stewards that have their Masters goods, not to put them in their own purses, or to convert them to their own advantage; but to be dispensing of them, and diffusing them for their Masters advantage; we are Stewards of the manifold grace of God: look, as God gives to fome more riches than to others, because he would have them to be more rich in good works than others : fo he gives to some more grace than he gives to others, because he would have the n diffusive of grace, making others rich in grace. He gives to some more comforts than he gives to others, because he would have them to comfort others with the same comforts wherewith they themselves are comforted of God, 2 Cor. 1.4, 5. The grace of God is given for this end, to dispence to others.

Fourtly, A fourth reason is this; If you do not act your graces, God shall lose his glory; and his glory should be dearer to you than your liberty, and all your outward comforts. It is a true speech of him that faid, the truth of grace doth fave my foul, but the acting of grace makes for the honour of God; the truth of Grace makes for my fafety, but the acting of grace makes for the service of God, in the place I am in. Now a child of God hath the glory of God lying near his heart: fays a child of God, I would lofe my life rather than the end of my life; I would be usefully spent for God, for the honour of God, for the name of God, in living, in fuffering, in dying, rather than to enjoy all the honours, or pleafures, or treasures that the world can afford. Thus you see the point opened and made good to you.

Now for the Use of it, and there are three Uses I shall make of it.

First, By way of Information: If they that have grace, must be acting, and increasing of it, then certainly it follows, That they that have no grace, had need to get it: If they that have received Christ Tefus, must walk in him; then they that have not received him, certainly they have great need, infinite need, to close with him. O the miserable, and doleful, and damnable condition of all those that for the present are in a Christless condition, in a graceless condition! no tongue of men or Angels is able fufficiently to express it; no tears of blood can sufficiently bewail it. If any of you die in such a condition, you must resolve to die everlastingly, and to fuffer the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude 7. you must resolve to be satisfying of a fin-revenging God in hell, and yet never be able to fatisfie him; you must be always dying, and yet never die, Rev. 6, And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it: and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them: This will be the condition of all those. that die Christless, that die graceless, that have not received Christ into their hearts, and that have not got grace into their hearts, oyl into their lamps; they shall be alway dying, and yet never die: O. with what weeping, and wailing, and wringing of their hands, and tearing of their hair, and renting of the cawl of their hearts, shall they cry out, O that I might dye, and dye, and never have a being more ! O that I might dye the most cursed, the most tormenting, the most painful death that ever creature on earth dyed, fo I may but dye: But this is the mifery of all mifery, Hive to dye, and must live eternally! This is the condition of all those that. have

have not got Christ in their hearts: Othen! why do you rest in such a condition one week, nay, one day! O, if ever there were any love to your fouls kindled in your breafts, any defire of falvation wrought in you, any care of escaping those unconceivable tortures and torments, refolve to receive Tesus Christ upon his own terms, and say, O Lord, rule in me as thou pleafest, so I may be but thine; resolve to receive him as a Prince, as well as a Saviour. It was a point I pressed upon you with all my might, from Acts 5.31, Receive Jelus Christ to give you repentance, as well as remission of fins: He is a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins: He gives repentance, before he gives remission; if he gives nor repentance for sin, he never gives remission of sin: O resolve to trade for him; fome of you know no other trade, but to trade in the world, to be tumbling up and down in dirt, and clay, and to provide for your Families: a Heathen man may do as much as you do: O that you would be perswaded to drive a Trade for heaven, for grace, for faving-grace. That which Solomon speaks of wildom, I may fay of every grace, Prov. 4. 7, Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting, get understanding. So fay I, grace is the principal thing, therefore with all thy getting, get grace : It is no matter, though thou be poor in the World, if thou beeft rich in grace; If thou shouldst be rich in the World, and get thy Coffers full of gold and filver, yet if thou get no grace in thy heart, it had been better that thou hadft never been born.

Secondly, By way of reproof; Here is a just and tharp reproof, even of Gods own children, that have received Christ, and yet do not walk in him,

do not walk worthy of him in all well-pleasing; that have received grace, and yet do not act grace, but rather wrap it up like a Talent in a Napkin: I cannot speak it without indignation, How many Christians are there, some of whom I am really perswaded they are the Servants of Jesus Christ, yet they are fick of a spiritual Lethargy, Appoplexy: they are in a spiritual slumber; a man in an Appoplex hath his reason, he is a reasonable man, but he cannot make use of his reason: what is man the better for his wealth, if he does not make use of his wealth? fo, what am I the better for grace, if I do not make use of it for the glory of God, and the good of others? In Matth. 25, you read, the five wife Virgins flumbered, as well as the five foolish: It is a fad thing, when even Gods own children, true Profeffors, shall be slumbering; yet the five wife Virgins flumbered, as well as the five foolish. Yet this is the condition of the Servants of God at this day; I can hardly meet with any, but their grace is fufpended, they are fallen afleep: their activity for for God, and their afting of grace, is lull'd afleep. I pray God he do not thunder against us, as once the Mariners did to Jonah; What meanest thou, O seeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not, Jonah 1.6. When the wind roars, and the waters rage, and the storms arise, and there is but a step between thee & death, and thou asleep, is it not a shame for thee to be fnorting when the ship is in danger of finking? fo may it be faid of all us who are affeep in fecurity; I pray God that he do not awake us with a rushing It may be the rod may come fooner on us than we are aware, and a sharper rod than we are aware of. Oh that I could but awaken my own foul,

the mark of our receiving of Christ. 109

foul, then I might hope to help to awaken you out of this spiritual slumber; then you would say to me as David did to Abigail, Blessed be God, and blessed be thou, that hast given me this counsel this day, 1 Sam. 25. 32, 33. Blessed be God that thou hast awakened me out of my sloth and security.

The third and last Use it is for Exhortation: If fo be it is not enough for Christians to receive Christ, and to receive grace, but they must be walking in Christ, and they must be acting of their grace; then I befeech you to hearken to the counsel of the Apostle here: I cannot give you the exhortation in better words than thefe in the Text, As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. Oh be walking in Christ; Oh be acting of your grace, Oh be stirring up your selves to take hold of God : Oh be stirring up the grace of God that is in you; Oh be active Christians, be not sleepy Christians, be not dull, drowsie, dead-hearted in matters of everlasting falvation: You have but little time to fpend, and you have need to fpend it well; every day brings you nearer your graves, Oh that every day might bring you nearer to God; God is continually acting for you; he is an overflowing, and an ever-flowing Fountain of goodness; God is continually renewing his mercy upon you; Jefus, Christ is continually interceding for you; the Spirit of God is continually knocking at the dore of your hearts: And is God acting for you, and will you all nothing for God?

Secondly, consider, Wicked men they are continually acting for Satan, continually doing the Devils drudgery: what a shame is it, that wicked men should take more pains to go to hell, than Gods children should take to go to heaven? Judas was

as busie as could be that night to betray his Master, plotting and contriving how to betray Christ into the hands of the Jews: when the rest of his Disciples were sleeping, Judas was waking to do the Devils work. I beseech you, let not wicked men rise up in judgment against you; let not them be more vigorous and active in the work of sin, than

you are in the work of grace and holinefs.

Thirdly, consider, If you be not acting your graces, God may juftly leave you to be acting your corruptions; if you be not acting one way, you will be acting another way: if you be not acting grace, be fure the Devil will fet you on work to be grinding of his grift. The mind of man is like a Mill, it is always grinding Chaff, or Wheat : if you be not doing Gods work, you will be doing Satans work. On the contrary; fee what the Apostle fays, Gal, 5. 16, This I fay then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. Be walking in the spirit, be acting the grace you have received, then you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh; though it is true, those lufts of the flesh, and curfed corruptions, will be stirring in you; yet you will never fulfil the lufts of the flesh: It may be you may be drawn to act them, to be fold under fin; as the poor captive is carried into captivity against his mind and will, fo you may be held under fin, and carried captive by it; but you will never willingly fulfil the lust of the flesh. But then, may be you will fay, What means, or helps, or directions can you prescribe to this end, that we may act grace? Briefly in answer to this, and so I have done.

First, I will shew you in whose strength you

must act grace.

Secondly, In what manner you must act grace.

Thirdly,

the mark of our receiving of Christ: 111

Thirdly, In what feafons you must act grace.

First, in whose strength you must act grace; I told you before; no man can do it in his own strength; therefore you must go out of your selves, and run to the Lord Jesus Christ, Hof. 11. 3. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their Arm: God does not only give us spiritual life, but he also gives us strength: He did not only give Ephraim life, but he gave him strength; I taught Ephraimte go, leading them by the arm. I remember the speech of Sampson, Judges 16. 20, when his locks were cut off, the Text fays, And he awoke out of his fleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake my self, and he wist not that the Lord was departed from him. I may apply it thus, Many times we fet about duty in our own strength, and we think to do fuch and fuch duties, as before; but alas! when the spirit of God is withdrawn, we are as weak as Sampson was when his locks were cut off. On the contrary, Let the King fit but at his table, then our Spicknard sendeth forth the smell thereof, Cant. 1. 12; that is, let Jesus Christ be but with us, then our graces, which are compared to Spicknard, fend forth a fweet fmell. If the wind blow upon our Garden, that is, the spirit of God working in the foul, (Awake O North-wind, and come thou South, blow upon my Garden, that the spices thereof may flow out, Cant. 4. 16.) then the spices will flow forth. If the Sun shine upon the Marygold, how foon does the Mary-gold open: Oh make fure of the presence of Tesus Christ with you; fay, Lord, let me have thy grace with me, as well as thy grace in me.

Secondly, I will shew you how, or in what

manner you must act Grace.

Firk, You must act your Graces evenly, not by girds and starts; Walking, we fay, is an equal, and even Motion: some there are; that are very forward, that will run for a quarter of a mile, then they fit down, having run themselves out of breath; this is the case of many forward Professors; Oh, they feem for a while to be very zealous God-ward, and Grace-ward, but then they faint, and flag, and grow weary of the ways of God. See what the Prophet David fays, Pfal. 119.112, I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end: That is a right acting of Grace indeed, a man that refolves to keep Gods statutes alway to the end; Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I hall keep it unto the end, in verse 33 of the same Pfalm.

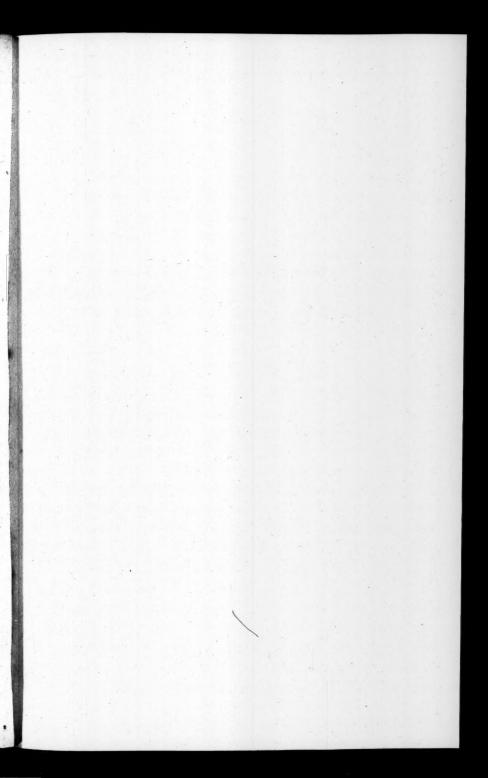
Secondly, As you must act Grace evenly, so you must act it orderly: that is, you must not turn aside either to the right hand, or to the lest: This is one of Gods own commands, Deut. 5. 32, Te shall observe to do therefore, as the Lord your God hath commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand, or to the left.

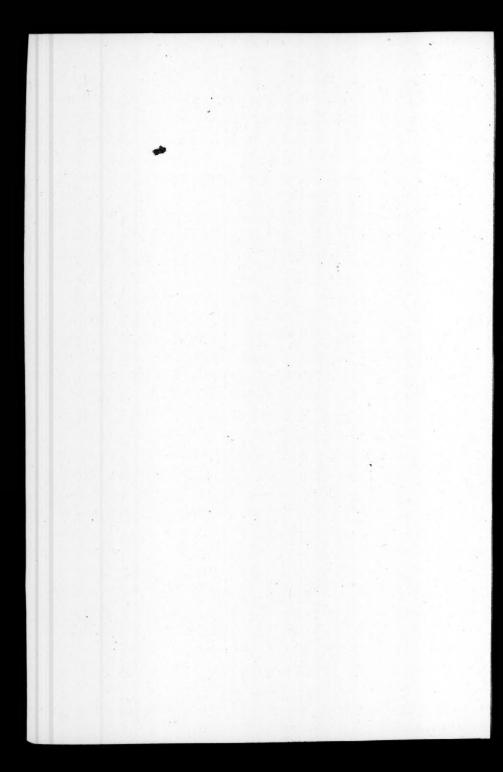
Thirdly, You must act your Grace Evangellically, to do all your duties from Christ, by Christ, and to Christ, from Christ as the Root, by Christ as the Rule, and to Christ as the end: Let Christ be the Spring, let him be the Guide, and let him be the

Centre of all your actings.

Fourthly, See that you act all your Graces I kewife couragiously, that you may say, Nothing shall daunt me, or discourage me in the way that I have undertaken. As David in the business of his dancing before the Lord, which was an evidence of his exceeding great zeal, when Michal scoft at him, says

he,





the mark of our receiving of Christ. 113

he, I will yet be more vile than thus, and be more base in my own sight, 2 Sam. 6.27. Lastly, Act Grace humbly; when you have done all that you can do, say you are unprofitable servants, and say with St. Paul, It was not I, but the grace of God which was with me, 1 Cor. 15. 10.

Lastly, I shall shew you in what seasons you must ast Grace; certainly Grace must be acted at all times, but there are some special seasons wherein

we must especially act Grace.

First, Upon the receipt of some special Mercy, then we should act Thanksulness more than ordinarily, and say, What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me! Psal. 116. 12. Is Gods hand enlarged in bounty? then let my heart be en-

larged with thankfulnels.

Secondly, When you lye under a smarting Rod, a piercing Affliction, then act Faith and Patience: A man usually never acts Grace better, than when he is under some abasement; a soul can better mannage a state of adversity, than it can a state of prosperity; for when it is in a state of abasement, then it is at a less distance from God; as Roses, they are never so sweet, as when they are in a Still, and fire is under them; never does our Graces usually send forth a sweeter savour, than when God is pleased to exercise us with Afflictions: David was never better than when he was under the Rod; then he made those heavenly foul ravishing Pfalms, that you meet with in the book of Plalms; The best Plalms, the most heavenly and spiritual Psalms were made when David was in a low condition; withefs the 34Pfalm, its one of the fweetest Pfalms you meet with; when was it made? when David was in the lowest condition that ever he was in; when he was in that

straight, he was forced to feign himself mad, 1 Sam. 21. 13. See how Davids heart was enlarged in the

making of this Pfalm.

Thirdly, Another fit season to ast Grace in, is, when you receive the seals of the Covenant of Grace in the use of the holy Ordinance of the Lords Supper; that is a time for you to ast Grace in; then should you be asting brokenness of heart: for, can you look upon a broken Saviour without a broken heart? upon a bleeding Saviour without a bleeding heart? then should you be asting Humility, and say as Mephibosheth, What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am? 2Sam.9.8. Nay, but here is more, that thou shouldst not only look on me, but set me at thy Table! what, a beggar, a loathsom seprous beggar, to sit at the Table of the King of Glory!

Then act Love to Jesus Christ: what, hath he loved me so dearly! Oh, how should I love him above all expressions of love, and be sick of love to

him!

Then act Faith especially, for that is a grace you have most need of when you come to the Lords Table; as now, saith is the very eye whereby we look upon him; it is the hand whereby we receive him; it is the mouth whereby we feed on him: says Christ, except you eat my flesh, and drink my blood, you have no life in you. Joh. 6. 52, 53. He does not here speak of a Corporal eating of him; far be it from us to have such a thought as they of Capernaum had; how can this man give us his slesh to eat? that man that believes in Christ, he feeds on Christ.

Then be afting of Thankfulness, after you have received the Lords Supper: Oh, what thanks shall I return to the Lord my God! Oh! my whole

courfe

rourse of life should be nothing but a continual gratulation to my Father, for that never-sufficiently admired gift of the Lord Jesus Christ; If I had ten thousand thousand tongues, I could never praise him

fufficiently!

Then act holy Refignation of your felves up to Christ; what, did the Lord give himself for me! I will give my felf up to him: was he crucified for my fins! I will crucifie my fins for him. Study conformity to him, and that will evidence that you have Communion with him: There is no more certain evidence of our Communion with Christ in his Grares, Comforts, Merits, and Spirit, &c. than in our conformity to him: when we refemble him in Grace here, it is a certain evidence that we shall resemble him in Glory hereafter. In one word, do but make it your business to be acting your Grace, and you may trust God for the bringing in of your Comforts; the more you are active in Grace, the more shall be your Comfort: If we had more activity of Grace, we should have more evidence of Christs dwelling in our hearts here; and God would have more Glory, our fouls would have more peace, and we should have abundance of more rejoycing in the day of our Lord Jefus.

Christs

CHRISTS TEMPTATION,

SAINTS SUPPORTATION.

A SERMON Preach'd

Decemb. 9. 1657.

Heb. II. 13.

For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

HE scope of the Apostle in the former Chapter is to prove that Jesus Christ is truly God, therefore far above the Angels; for says he in the fifth verse of that Chapter, Unto which of the Angels said he at any time, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? In this Chapter the Apostle proves that Jesus Christ is truly man, and therefore in that respect inferiour to the Angels, Verse 9, But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the Angels, for the suffering of death, crowneed

trowned with glory and honour. And because it might be demanded, But why is it needful that Jefus Christ should be man? why did he not take on hin the nature of Angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham? Verse 16. The Apostle give us four reasons, why our blessed Saviour would be man, why he took our human nature upon him.

First, He did it for the sanctification of our nature, and that reason is set down in v. 11, For both be that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one and the same nature; we come all from one common root; Christ came from the same root that we did, namely from Adam; and this he did, that he might sanctifie our nature.

Secondly, The Lord Jesus Christ became man, that he might in our nature, and for our benefit, destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil: that is set down in Verse 14, For a smuch then as the children are partakers of sless and blood, he also himfelf likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.

Thirdly, He became man, that he might deliver us not only from the hurt of death, but deliver us also from the fear of death; and that's fet down in Verse 15, And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage.

Fourthly, He became man, that by the experience of his sufferings in our nature, he might be a merciful and faithful High-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; and that's set down in Verse 17. And the ground of this Affection the Apostle lays down in the words of the Text, which I have now read unto you, For in

3

that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. So then the Text contains in it a fingular benefit and advantage that believers have by Christs temptations, namely, a fanctified use of temptations, and a gracious support under temptations. For the clearing of this, you must know, all that ever our Lord and Saviour did here upon earth as Mediator, was done not for himfelf alone; but was done for us, and for our good. For example, He took our flesh in the womb of a Virgin, that he might fanctifie our nature: He was born of a woman, that he might fanctifie our birth: He fuffered in the flesh, that he might sanctifie our sufferings; He was buried in a grave, that he might fweeten and perfume the grave, that he might make the grave as a bed of spices; He rose again from the dead, that he might affure us that we shall be raised by his power, 1 Cor. 6. 14, And God bath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by bis own power: And he was tempted, that he might be able to fuccour us when we are tempted. Let me first open the words to you, and then draw out the Doctrine I intend to pitch upon. I shall dispatch this Text in one Sermon.

Jesus Christ suffered indeed; He was a great sufferer; nay, the greatest sufferer that you read of in the whole book of God: He suffered in his Circumcision: when he was but eight days old, he condescended to that painful Ceremony, that painful Sacrament: He suffered a painful pilgrimage for three and thirty years together; and although he was heir of all things, all the Kingdoms of the world were his, yet he had not a house to hide his head in; The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have

nefts,

mests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head Mat. 8. 20. He suffered by Satan when he was led into the Wilderness to be tempted for forty days together, which was a greater abasement to the Son of God, than if the greatest Empress in the world should be solicited in her chastity by the basest Scullion that ever was. Oh how did Satan hurry the body of our dear Lord and Saviour, first to the pinacle of the Temple, then he hurried it to a Mountain, and carried it from one place to another! Oh that the precious body of Jesus Christ should be thus basely used, by a Vassal, by a cursed Fiend, by a cursed creature! So he suffered by Satan.

And he suffered by men; he suffered the contradiction of finners; he suffered himself to be reviled, scorned, reproached, blasphemed, when they said, Say we not well, Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a Devil? Joh. 8. 48, And he is mad, and hath a Devil, why hear ye him? Joh. 10. 20. He suffered on the Cross a shameful, painful, and cursed death; He suffered in his body, but most of all he suffered in his foul, when he faid, My foul is heavy unto death, is girt about with death, Joh. 12. 27, Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? He speaks as if he had been non-plust; My foul is so troubled, fays he, that I know not what to fay, I know not what to do. So you fee the Lord Jefus Christ he fuffered. Further, the Text lays he suffered being tempted: Jesus Christ you know was tempted by Satan. for forty days together, and he was tempted by his Enemies: the Pharifes they required a fign of him, tempting of him, Luk: 11. 16. Then he was tempted by the Herodians, when they came with that captious question, Shall we give tribute to Cafar, or Chall

Shall we not? Mat. 22. 17, 18. Christ answered them, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? He was temptted by one of his Disciples, Peter; says he to him, Master; spare thy self, and do not go up to Jerusalem; infomuch that Christ sharply reproved him, and faid to him, Get thee behind me Satan, thou art, an offence unto me, for thou favourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men, Mat. 16.22, 23. And he was tempted even by his own dear Father when his Father hid his face from him, when he feemingly did forfake him, when he cryed out, My God, my God, why bast thou for saken me? Mat. 27. 46, So you fee, that our Saviour fuffered, and our Saviour was tempted: And why was he tempted? that he might succour them that are tempted, saye the Text. Why, may some say, did the sufferings and temptations of Jesus Christ add any thing to his ability to fuccour his tempted Servants, which he had not before? To this I ar fiver, You must know he had an ability of Power, which was irreliftable; he had an ability of Power, as he was God: but the Apostle speaks here, of an ability of Compassion, or of an ability of Experience, as he was man; as he fays in the like case, Heb. 5. 8, He learned obedience by the things which he suffered: How did he learn it? he learnt it experimentally: So here, by his fuffering, and temptations, he learnt to fuccour them that are tempted; he learnt compassion by his temptations: How did he learn compassion? he learnt it experimentally; for now he hath learned by experience, to know the kinds of temptations, to know the wounds that temptations make in the foul of a poor finner, and to know the proper means and medicines for the cuting of temptations: fo that if you ask, But why was the Lord Jefus Christ tempted ?

tempted? I answer, he was tempted for these three

ends especially.

First, That he might teach us this Lesson: If Satan was fo bold with him that was the dear Son of God, he will be much more bold in tempting us poor creatures; If he was so bold with the Master. much more will he be bold with the Servants; Ifhe were to bold with the Captain of our falvation, much more will he be bold with his Soldiers; If he were fo bold in tempting him who was the King of glory, a pure and spotles Saviour, a Lamb without fpot and blemish, in whose mouth could be found no guile, 1 Pet.2.22. Oh, he will be much more bold with us, that are poor finful creatures, that have fuch impure and defiled natures: How abominable and filthy is man! Job 15. 16. When the Devil came to tempt our Lord and Saviour, he found nothing in him, he found no matter to work upon, he found no corruption on which he might fasten his temptation, Joh. 14. 30, The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. All the temptations of Satan upon our Saviour were but like the jogging of pure and clean water in a Chrystal glass, where is no mud at all: but now Satan never comes to us, but he finds matter enough, and groundenough to work upon; there is a great deal of mud at the bottom, therefore he prevails on us when he comes. But that is one end, that he may teach us to expect temptations, he himself was tempted: then certainly much more must we expect to be tempted.

Secondly, Jesus Christ was tempted, that he might know how to compassionate us in our temp-

tations.

Thirdly, He was tempted, that he might take

out the sting, the poison, the venom of every temptation, that though we be forely affaulted by Satan. yet we may not be conquered by Satan. That that David speaks to Saul, Pfal. 188. 13, Thou hast. thrust sore at me, that I might fall, but the Lord help-The like may Believers fay of Satan, Thou haft thrust fore at me, if it were possible to thrust me into hell, but the Lord is my helper; nay, God can fo order it, when Satan thrufts his forest darts at us, he can ward off the blow, or at least so order the temptation, that it shall kill our fins, and not hurt our fouls. As I have read a story of one Pareus Jason, who was conflicting with his adversary, when his adversary thought to have run him through with his fword, God did fo order it, that it did open an imposthumation, which all Physicians could not heal, fo that instead of killing of him, he preserved his life; so God can so order it, when Satan is thrusting forely at us with his temptations, they shall kill our fins, but shall not hurt our fouls. So then the words being opened to you, the way to the Doctrine is made plain, which is this:

Doct. Christs temptations and his sufferings for us, stir up in his heart a tender compassion to succour us in

our temptations, and in our fufferings.

That which God commands Israel, is suitable to this, Exod. 23.9, Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. So the Lord Jesus Christ knows the hearts of tempted ones, and knows how to pity tempted ones, because he himself was tempted. That which the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 1.4, God comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted

of God. I may apply it thus: The Lord Jesus Christ knows how to succour us, to comfort us, to support us in our temptations, with the same spirit that he had in his sufferings, and in his temptations, though his temptations were so great, that he himself needed an Angel to come and comfort him. For the better explication of this point, there are two Quæries that would be satisfied.

First, Why Christs sufferings and temptations stir up in his heart such tender compassion towards us, to succour and relieve us in our temptations and

fufferings?

Secondly, How the Lord Jesus Christ does succour and relieve poor tempted ones, in their distres-

fes and fufferings?

For the first, Why does Christs sufferings and temptations, stir up in his heart fuch tender compassions towards us? I answer, The reason is plainly this; because the Lord Jesus Christ his suffering in our Nature, makes him not only a merciful God, but a merciful Man alfo; the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is God equal with the Father to all Eternity, fo his mercies are from everlasting to everlasting, Plal. 103. 17. But now his sufferings in our flesh, ma'es him not only a merciful God, but a merciful man alfo, a merciful Mediator between God and man; fo he hath not only beams of Majesty, but bowels of mercy; his fufferings made him a merciful Highpriest, that is touched with the sense of our infirmities, as you read Heb. 4.15, for (fays he) We have not an High priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points rempted like as we are, yet without sin. The Lord Jesus Christ fuffered all our natural infirmities, though he did not suffer our sinful infirmities; He was tempted

in all things like unto us, yet without fin: a merciful High-priest he is: and this is that, that makes him so tender-hearted to the sufferings and infirmities of his People: Oh, what bowels of compassion hath Jesus Christ towards the souls of poor People, Mat. 9. 36, the Text fays, When he faw the multitude, he was moved with compassion on them, becanse they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep baving no shepheard; His bowels did earn towards them, as the word ionaxxvioon fignifies; he had compassion on their souls, because they wanted those that might instruct them in the way of life and happinels. And what compassion had he on the bodies of poor ones, that waited on his Doctrine? Mat. 15. 32, Then Jesus called his disciples to him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they bave continued with me now three days, and have nothing to eat, and I will not send them away sasting, lest they faint in the way. And what compassion had he towards the poor Widow, that had loft her only fon, and they were now carrying him to the Grave; the Text fays, he had compassion on her, his Bowels did earn towards the poor Widow; therefore he touched the Coffin and raifed him up again, Luke 7.13. Look as a Child-bearing woman, that hath felt the bitter pangs and pains of Childbirth, bath more compassion towards a woman in that diffress, than a barren woman that never felt those pangs and forrows; or, as a man that hath been forely afflicted with the Gout or Stone, pitianother man that is afflicted with the fame difeafe, more than one that never felt the torment of that difeafe; and as it is storied of Queen Elizabeth, when she passonce through an Hospital where she saw many poor Oephans, and Fatherless, and helpless Children ;

Children; Oh, fays she, I was once an Orphan, a poor helpless creature when I was shut up in prison. therefore, fays she, I have tasted of the sufferings of Orphans, and I cannot but be merciful to Orphans: and as it is faid of Luther. That he was a rare and and excellent man in comforting afflicted confciences, those that were tempted and afflicted, why? because he himself was exercised with temptations for three years together; fo here, the Lord Jesus Christ is a most rare and excellent Comforter, a Physician good at all diseases, especially at binding up broken hearts, and comforting tempted fouls; why, because he himself had experience of the sting and venom of temptations: but some may fay, the Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven: hath he not left the bowels that he had on earth? I answer, No, the Text fays, Isa. 63.9, In all their afflittions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: in his love, and in his pitty he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. Act. 9. 4, the Lord Christ cryes out, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? when a man treads upon another mans little toe, the tongue complains, why do you hurt me? Jefus Christ when he is now in heaven, he complains of himself being persecuted in his Members, he hath fuch a simpathy with them. That's the first Quary.

Secondly, It may be demanded, How does Jesus Christ succour and relieve his servants in their temptations? I answer, he succours and relieves

them these five ways.

First, By discovering to them that it is a temptation: for many there are that missiste their temptations; some take temptations for the impulses, or impresses of Gods spirit, not considering that there

are tempting providences, as well as approving providences: fuch a providence was that which you read of, when David had Saul at an advantage, 1 Sam. 26. 8, When Saul lay sleeping in his trench, and his spear fluck in the ground at his bolster, then faid Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thy hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear, even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time : Abithai thought that this was an approving medicine, that God had delivered Saul into the hands of David, and now he may be avenged upon him, and cut his throat, and smite him presently; nay, nay, says David to Abishai, destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lords anointed, and be guiltless? David saw it was a tempting-providence, not an approving-providence; he would not have a hand in his blood; he would not flay the Lords anointed, though his enemy, though a wicked man, though a man guilty of blood, for he had flain Fourscore of the Lords Priests at one time, commanding Doeg to fall upon them and deftroy them: But fays David, I will not have a hand in the blood of the Lords anointed, though he hath delivered him into my hand: this was but a tempting-providence, not an approving-providence: this is a certain Rule, that there are tempting providences as well as approving-providences; to follow providence without the Word, is dangerous; to follow providence against the Word, is damnable; but to follow providence with the Word, that only is fafe and comfortable: now David he had a providence here, but he had not the Word of God going along with that providence, and therefore he looks upon it as a tempting-providence. Now Jefus

fus Christ succours his people by discovering to them which is a tempting-providence, and which is

an approving-providence.

Secondly, The Lord Christ succours and relieves them by his Gracious Supportation; he does support them under their tryals; that is a precious Scripture, that tempted ones should be continually meditating upon, 1 Cer. 10. 13, There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. God fometimes draws the Bow to the Arrow head, but he will not break the Bow; if God lays heavy loads on poor tempted ones, then he will make their shoulders fo much the stronger by his Gracious Manutency, or holding them by the hand, Pfal. 73.23, Nevertheless, I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand: And when God holds a poor tempted foul by the right hand, though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down, because the Lord upholds him, Pfal. 37. 24.

Thirdly, Jesus Christ relieves and succours tempted ones by his gracious intercession; for he sits at the right hand of God to make intercession for them, Heb. 7. 25, and if so be thou art but one that does but desire to believe in Jesus Christ, and take hold of him, though it be but with a trembling hand, know thus much for thy comfort, in every temptation that thou meetest with, Jesus Christ does nominate thee to his Father, he nominates thee in particular, and he says to thee as he did to Peter, I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, Luke

22. 32.

Fourthly, Jesus Christ does succour and relieve tempted

tempted ones by making a diversion some way or other of them; by a less temptation sometimes he prevents a greater, that would even crush a poor soul to pieces; sometimes by an outward affliction upon the body, he prevents a greater affliction and trouble that would lye upon the spirit: It is better a thousand times to be afflicted in the body, than afflicted in the mind.

Fifthly, The Lord Christ doth succour tempted ones by a gracious Abolition, as I may call it; by a total removal of the temptation, when he treads Satan under our feet, as he hath promised, Rom. 16.20, And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. And when he gives Charge to Satan, as he did to him concerning the poor Child that was possessed with a dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee that thou come out of him, and that thou enter into him no more, Mark. 9.23. Thus you have the point opened: Now briefly to apply it, two Uses I shall make of it. Frist for Information. Secondly for Consolation.

First, For information: you may learn this Leffon by way of Inference, That Gods own people, his Elect, true Believers, must look for temptations, nay they must look for divers temptations, Jam. 1.

12, My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations: in 1 Pet.6, Wherein ye greatly rejoyce, though now for a season if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. They must look for temptations of all forts; as the Apostle saith in the like case, All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution: so all that will live godly, must look for temptations. Gods People may be tempted these four ways:

First, Sometimes they may be tempted by their godly

godly friends; so was St. Paul, Acts 11. 12, when the Prophet Agabus foretold, that Paul should be bound at Jerusalem, and suffer so many things of the Jews: Pauls godly friends disswaded him from going thither: but Paul lookt upon it as a temptation; for, says he in the next verse, What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart? for I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus, Acts 21. 13.

Secondly, Gods people are fometimes tempted by wicked men, as Joseph was by his wanton and

lascivious Mistress.

Thirdly, Gods people are tempted fometimes by Satan, they are tempted to presumption on the one hand, and to desperation on the other hand: For these are two great Rocks upon which thousands of souls suffer shipwrack; but there are more that perish on the rock of Presumption, than

of Desperation.

Fourthly, Gods Children are sometimes tempted by God himsels: it is said, God tempted Abraham to try him, Gen. 22. 1, And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempte Abraham: and faid unto him, Abraham; and he said, behold, here I am: But yet remember this withal, God tempts only by way of probation, God does not tempt by way of seduction: God tempts none but by way of probation. If it be so, then Christians should be expecting temptations: when you foresee a dart that is shot against you, you may the more easily avoid it; if you be forewarned, you may the more easily be fore-armed.

The fecond Use, it is for Confolation; Here is matter of unspeakable comfort to all tempted ones: It may be I speak to some such in this Congrega-

K

tion this day. We find every Lords day some that fend their Bills to be prayed for, that are battered and bruifed with temptations. Now I do not know one portion of Scripture in the whole Book of God, that affords more fweet Soul-fupporting comfort, than this Text: though you fee matter of discouragement to you from your temptations, yet you may look for matter of encouragement from Christs temptations. Art thou tempted to distrust thy adoption, whether thou art a child of God, or no? fo was Jefus Christ; If thou be the Son of God. If thou art tempted to distrust the Providence of God, so was Jesus Christ; If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread, when he was led into the Wilderness, and was there forty days, and had nothing to eat. Art thou tempted to prefumption? fo was Jesus Christ, that he should cast himself down headlong from the pinacle of the Temple. Art thou tempted to felf-murther? fo was the Lord Jesus Christ, when Satan would have had him cast himself down from the pinacle of the Temple to destroy himself. Art thou tempted to blasphemy? fo was Jesus Christ; for it was the most horrid blasphemy that could be named, that the Lord Tefus Christ should fall down and worship a cursed Vaffal, Satan: that he should give that honour to that curfed wretch that was due only to God: there was no fin fo horrid, nor heinous, nor hellish, to which Christ was not tempted: he was tempted to the vilest fin that is, but he yielded not. Hence you may observe, that it is not fin to be tempted to fin, but it is fin to yield to temptations; therefore do not yield to temptations. Art thou tempted either to Presumption, or Desperation, Atheism,

Atheism, or Blaspemy? do not yield to that temptation, but run to Jesus Christ under that temptation, even as the chickens run under the Hens wing, when they see the Kite coming: and say, O Lord Jesus, thou wast tempted, that thou mightest succour me when I am tempted. O do not lead me into temptation, but deliver me from the evil, that I do not faint under them, nor be foiled by them: Lead me not into temptation: that is, leave me not in temptations, but lead me out of them: for I slye to thee.

But may be you will fay to me, What means or helps may we use, that we may be strengthned against temptations, those temptations wherewith Satan assaults us? For answer to this, let me briefly give these seven or eight practical Rules, which I carnestly beg of you that you would make use of.

The first practical Rule is this: Let not Satan know all that is in thy heart, for thereby Satan may get a great advantage against you; do not speak all that thou thinkest: if thou be one inclined (for example) to the sin of Pride, do not shew it in thy gayish Apparel; if thou be one inclined to the sin of uncleanness, do not shew it in thy wanton gestures; if thou be one inclined to covetousness; do not shew it in thy earthly, greedy, gaping after riches; let not Satan know what is in thy heart.

2dly, Do not tempt the Tempter to tempt thee; my meaning is this, be not bold with those sins for which thou hast before smarted: for by softering any unmortified lust, thou puttest a weapon into Satans hand to wound thee with: be not bold with the occasions of sin; do not venture into the Devils quarters, as St. Peter did you know; when he went into the High-Priests hall, there he met with an

K 2

occasion to fin: he tempted Satan to tempt him. Thirdly, Do not think by yielding to one temptation, thou shalt be freed from all the rest; for if thou yield but to one temptation, Satan will be more violent in tempting thee, than he was before. I have read of a young man that was tempted to three grofs fins: to kill his Father, to abuse his Mother, and to be Drunk; the Devil told him, if he would yield to one of these, he should be tempted no more; at last he yielded to that which was the least of them, namely to be drunk: but when he had yielded to one, the Devil prevailed with him after to do the two other: fo that he kill'd his Father, abused his Mother; so that by yielding to one temptation, thou doft strengthen Satan, but it weakens thy own hands. As they fay of the French in their fighting, at the first onset they are like Lions: but if they be strongly relisted at the first, then they are very Cowards: So it is here, the Devil at his first Assault is violent; the second Asfault, if he be refisted, is weaker: If he be refisted

you: So if Satan be refifted, he is a very Coward.

Fourthly, The fourth practical Rule is this: Do not lay all the blame upon Satan for thy temptations, but lay the blame in a great measure upon thy felf, upon thy own receptive tinder-like disposition; Oh complain to God, and say, true Lord, the Devil is continually friking fire, but my heart is

in his third Assault, he is a very Coward; therefore, resist the Devil, and he will flye from you, James 4.7. hold thy weapon in thy hand, though it be beaten to thy head. As they observe of the Crocadile in Nihus, if you run away from the Crocadile, then he will follow you; but if you come up to follow him mansfully, then he will run away from

too ready to take the fire: I have a tinder-like heart, more ready to take fire, than the Devil is to strike; and therefore thou shouldst wet thy tinder with thy tears, that the fire of temptation may not take hold of thy heart. You may read of our Grand-mother Eve, she layed all the blame upon the Serpent, The Serpent deceived me, and I did ear. But David on the contrary, having a holy frame of heart, laid the blame upon himself: when Satan tempted him to number the People, 2 Sam. last: he complains not of Satan, but himself; says he, Lo I bave sinned, I have sinned, I have done wickedly; as for these sheep, what have they done? So I say, lay

the blame on thy Tinder-like heart.

Fifthly, Observe, Satan in his first temptations is more modest than he is usually afterwards: his first temptations are usually of a finer-spun thred, that fo he may draw into greater fins: for Example, When he tempted our Saviour, his first temptation was this: fays he, Matth. 4, Cause these stones to be made bread: thou mayst as well turn stones into bread, as water into wine; but then afterwards, he comes to more gross and grievous temptations, to cast himself down headlong, to murther himself, and commit the horridest Idolatry that can be named. So Satan is modest at the first: he will perfwade thee to tell a merry jocond lye, to tell a lye in jest, that is no great matter; from a jesting lye, he periwades thee to tell an officious lye, for an advantage to thy felf, or neighbour; from an officious lye, he will tempt thee to a pernicious lye, to tell a lye for thy neighbours ruine; for the ruine of thy neighbours Name, or Goods, or Life. Oh, observe the wiles of Satan, his temptations are at fift more modest.

The fixth Rule is this: Do not think when one temptation is conquered, or relifted, that therefore thy corruption is mortified: or, that the Devil is quite vanquisned, or quite hath left thee: no, for Satan lest our Saviour but for a season, Luke 4. 13, after he was shamefully vanquished and soiled, he lest him for a season; he came to him again, as he did in John 4. 30, The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. The Devil, like a Ram, sometimes retires, that he may come forwards with

the greater violence.

Seventhly, Would you be strengthned against temptations? then above all, take the Shield of Faith, that is the Apostles Rule, Eph. 6. 16, Above all take the shield of faith, whereby you may quench all, the fiery darts of the devil; Faith is the eyelof the foul. Now as a cunning Fencer, when he is striving with his Adversary, the first thing that he aims at, is to strike out the eye of him with whom he is contesting; if he can but strike out the eye, then he knows he hath a great advantage : fo the Devil this cunning Fencer, he strikes at the eye of Faith; if he can but conquer thy Fath, he knows he shall conquer thy foul; therefore, fays he, I fight neither against small nor great, but against this King-Grace; I fight against Faith; therefore our Savour prays that Peters Faith should not fail ; fo long as his faith did not fail, though his other Graces he routed, and broken, yet Faith will recover all. That was an admirable Captain, who when the Battel was loft, recovered it again himfelf when all his Soldiers fled and left him; namely, Shammah, 2 Sam. 23.12, He glone flood to the battel, and conquered a whole Troop, and flew many of the Philistines: Faith may be compared to Sharomah; when

when other Graces are foyled, and routed, our Faith will recover all again; Now how should we strengthen Faith? Faith is compared to a Shield; now this Shield is composed of four or five plates:

First, The gracious Promises that God hath made; this is one plate that makes the shield of Faith: you cannot be cast into such a condition, wherein you may not meet with some Promise; therefore study the Promises, such as these: When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, Ifa. 43. 2. So that is an excellent Scripture, Ifa. 42. 19, And I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight; these things will I do unto them, and not for sake them. What a precious Promise is that! though God leads his people through a dark Wilderness, as I may fay, and they fee not one beam of light; yet notwithstanding, if they lean upon the Lord, he will cause darkness to be light before them.

A fecond Plate that the shield of Faith is composed of, and made up of, is, the glorious Attributes of God: Gods Wisdom, Power, Mercy, Goodness, Truth; all these put together, do spell All-sufficiency: the wisdom of God to guide us, the power of God to protest us, the mercy of God

to pity us, and the like.

Thirdly, Another Plate is this: the triumphant victory of Jesus Christ; he hath conquered our Enemy, blessed be his Name; our Saviour he hath crusht the head of the Serpent, as Luther said ex-

K 4

cellently, Why should we fear a conquered world, when the Conqueror himself is on our side? so, why should we fear a conquered Enemy, a curied Enemy, when the Conqueror himself is on our side?

The fourth Plate is this: The former Experiments we have had of Gods goodness, 2 Cor. 1. 10. Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth de-liver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. And when the Prophet David was in those straits, when he cryed out, Will the Lordcast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? hath God forgotten to be gracious, hath he in anger shut up his tender mercy? Oh, fays he, This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most high. Plal. 77. 7, 8, 9, 10, I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Nizar; there I had a deliverance, and there I had a deliverance; and when my foul is cast down within me, I will remember thee at fuch a place, and at fuch a place, where thou didft work a great deliverance for me, Pfal. 42.

Fifthly, The last Plate the shield of Faith is made up of, is, Gods infinite love in giving of Jesus Christ; He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall be not with him freely give us all things? If God hath given us Jesus Christ, he will give us supportation under trouble, and he will give us deliverance out of trouble.

The last Direction is this; Give not over praying: Although for the present thou sees not the fruit of thy prayers, give not over praying; but remember, he that was tempted for thee on earth, is now interceding for thee in heaven: Satan cannot be more ready to assault thee, than Jesus Christ to assist thee; Satan cannot be so busie on earth

earth to hurt thee, as Jesus Christ is buse in heaven to help thee; and prayer through the intercession of Jesus Christ can cast out Devils. Mr. Fox in his book of Martyrs in the fecond Volume, speaking of Luther in the life of King Henry the eighth, mentions a story of a man that was possessed with the Devil, that had fold his foul to the Devil at Wittenburg: But Luther got a company of praying Christians together, to feek God on his behalf, and would not give over feeking, till they had received an Answer: So at last, the Devil in a great wind threw the Indenture in at the window. Sometimes Prayer casts out the Devil; God sometimes gives fuch fignal testimonies of hearing Prayer, for the enocuragement of his Servants; therefore do not give over relifting Satans temptations, nor praying against him. Do as that bleffed Saint Katharine Bretter, when the was continually haunted with Satans temptations: faid fhe, Satan, I am but a weak woman, I am not able to answer all thy cavils and objections, but I will turn thee over to my Advocate; I have an Advocate in Heaven to plead my cause; and after that, she was never solicited by him. So do you, turn over thy case to thy Advocate, as a poor Client does that has got a learned and faithful Advocate, leaves his cause with him: turn over all to thy Advocate, that appears in the presence of God continually for thee, Heb. 9. 24, For Christ is not entred into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven it self, now to appear in the presence of God for us: he appears as our Advocate. And if God do not answer thee speedily, or if he do not answer thee in the Letter of thy request, yet if thou canft but get fuch a frame of heart as those three

three Worthies had, Dan. 3: 17. 18, Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery-furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand. OKing: But if not, be it known unto thee, O King. that we will not ferve thy gods, nor wor ship thy golden-image which thou hast set up. So do thou say to Satan, God is able to deliver me out of thy hands; but yet, if he do not, I am resolved I will not yield unto thee, Satan; but I will lye at the feet of God, and look up. If God do but give fuch a gracious frame of spirit as this, thou mayst be confident this Text shall be fulfilled to thee; and that heaven and earth shall pass away, before this truth shall pass away, held forth in this Doctrine. That Christs sufferings and temptations stir up in his heart a compassion to succour and relieve us in our fufferings and Temptations.

tal rest of six and as an exemplican

is an expectation of the confidence of the Color of the c

an inneal to within a news tore find flows would be

Fear

Fear of missing Salvation: or, the way to obtain Salvation.

HEB. IV. 1.

Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being lest us of entring into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

N the last Text that I opened unto you, out of 2 Tim. 1. 10, And hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel: I shewed you, That the Salvation of God, or eternal Life and Salvation, was revealed to the fons of men by the preaching of the Gospel; and how infinitely we stand indebted and engaged to our God for our Gospel-mercies and Priviledges; that we are in a capacity of getting our fouls faved; that we fit not in darkness and in the shadow of death as others do: that we are not aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel (the Church of God, as others are): that we are not strangers to the Covenant of Grace, Ephes. 2. 12: and strangers to the mysteries of Salvation, and the way of Salvation revealed in the Gospel.

Certainly, Brethren, we shall never know how much we are indebted unto God, nor can ever praise him enough for our Gospel-mercies, until we

come

come to Heaven. That I aim at in the choice of this Text, is to flew you, and (if it be possible) to make you fensible of the infinite and unconceiveable danger of milling this Salvation, this eternal Life that is held forth in the Gospel ; Let us therefore fear, left, &c. For, as I shall shew you by Gods affiftance, if any of us who have the means of Salvation tendered to us in the Gospel, and that hope of Salvation, and the way to Salvation; if any of us should come short of Salvation, it were better a thousand times that we had never known the Gospel: for none shall have a deeper place in Hell, than they that have had Gospel-opportunities, and have not known in that their day the things that belong to their peace: And certainly the tears of Hell are not sufficient to bewail the loss of Heaven, the loss of Salvation; Let us therefore fear, test a promise being left us of entring into his rest, any of you (hould feem to come (hort of it.

For the connexion of this, or the coherence of these words with the sormer Chapter, take it thus briefly: If you look upon this Epistle to the Hebrews with a discerning eye, you shall see that the scope of the Apostle is, to lift up the Lord Jesus Christ in his three glorious Offices, of a King, of a Priest, and of a Prophet; and to shew his Dignity and Preheminence above the Angels, in Chap. 1, above Moses, in Chap. 3, above Maron, in Chap. 7.

Now the Apostle proving in Chap. 3, the Dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ above Moses, although Moses was the most eminent man that ever lived upon the earth (there was none that ever had more acquaintance with God, talking with him familiarly, as a man talks with his friend; and therefore he was said to be a King in Jesurun);

yet

vet the Apostle proves the Dignity and Preheminence of Tefus Christ above Moses 3 in Chap. 3. 5. 6, faith the Apostle, And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, that is 'in the Church of God, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Jesus Christ as a Son over his own house; and therefore Christ is far above Moles. And he takes occasion from hence to lay down this ferious Exhortation to thefe Hebrews, and in them to all succeeding Christians, that they should take heed that they do not harden their hearts against the voice of Jesus Christ, in ver. 15, of the foregoing Chapter, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. Harden not your hearts against Christ. against the voice of Christ in his Word; that this Exhortation might take the deeper impression, the Apostle puts them in mind of a dreadful example of Gods wrath and indignation, executed upon the stubborn Israelites in the Wilderness; they hardned their hearts, they believed not his Word; and therefore God was fo offended with them, that their carcaffes perish in the Wilderness; yea, the Lord took an Oath, he sware that they should newer enter into his Rest. Having laid down this dreadful example of Gods wrath, in ver. 17. 18, of the foregoing Chapter; thereupon he infers this ferious admonition, That all Christians should take heed that they run not into the same danger that they did? and that they do not deprive themfelves of that eternal Rest that is laid up in Heaven, as the Israelites deprived themselves of the Rest of Canaan; Let us therefore (faith the Apostle) fear, lest a promise being lest us of entring into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short

Fear of missing Salvation, of,

of it. So then in the Text you may take notice of these three particulars:

1. You have a ferious Premonition or forewarning, in these words, Let us therefore fear.

2. You have the ground or foundation of this Premonition, in these words, Lest a promise being

left us of entring into his Rest.

3. A dreadful danger discovered, in case this warning be neglected, in these words, Any of you feem to come fort of it; that is, short of that E-

ternal Rest that is promised.

In the first, the serious Premonition or forewarning, you have these two particulars: First, the occasion of this Premonition, in this word Therefore; Now this word therefore, hath reference to something that went before in the foregoing Chapter; the Apostle had told us of a generation of finners in the Wilderness, that had provoked the Lord to anger for forty years together: infomuch, that the Lord sware that they should not enter into his Rest; and so it came to pass, for of fix hundred thousand that came out of Egypt, there were but two, namely, Caleb and Joshua, that entred into the Land of Canaan; I fay, not above two (of those that were above twenty years old) that entred into the Land of Canaan, but their carcasses fell in the Wilderness, the Wilderness was their grave; therefore, saith he, because of this dreadful example of Gods wrath upon these stubborn Israelites, Let us fear; it is as if he should fay, let their wo be our warning, their destruction should be our instruction: from hence you may take this point of Dostrine.

The examples of Gods wrath upon other sinnners, should make us very careful to shun their sins.

And then secondly, You have the Premonition it self, in these words, Let us therefore fear; and from thence you may take this Observation:

The life of a Christian must be a life of fear; The whole course of a Christians life, must be a course of godly and watchful fear.

And then you have the ground or foundation of this Premonition, in these words, Lest a promise being lest us of entring into his Rest; wherein you have three particulars.

1. That there is a heavenly Rest, an eternal Rest prepared; this the Apostle takes for granted. He speaks here of entring into this Rest; therefore there is a Rest prepared; from whence you may take this Observation:

That there is a Rest prepared in Heaven for Gods people.

2. This Rest is not only prepared, but it is also promised. Observe here, faith the Apostle, Lest a promise being left us of entring into his Rest; from hence you may observe,

That the Rest prepared in Heaven for Gods People, is not only prepared, but also promised to all them that do believe.

3. Take notice, This Rest, though it be prepared and promised, may yet be lest and forsaken by those to whom the promise is tendred, for so the word here in the original signifies, lest the promise be forsaken; I know our translation reads the word thus, lest a promise being lest us: as if so be this were the tense of it, lest a promise being given us, lest a promise being lest us as a Legacy, lest a promise being bestowed upon us; but the word Us is not in the Original; nor in the old Transslation, as a late Learned Eminent Writer, in his

Dr. Gouge. Hebrews observes; the old Translati-

on feems to come nearest the sense, which reads it thus, Lest by for saking the promise, we be deprived of that rest; so that although the promise be made, though the promise of entring into rest be tendered to many; yet notwithstanding this Promise may be lest, may be for saken: the words being taken in this sense; you may observe this Proposition or Doctrine from them.

Though God be infinitely gracious in making a promise of eternal Rest: yet many there are that do shamefully for sake this Promise.

The third and last branch of the Text, is the dreadful danger discovered, in case this Premonition be neglected, that is in these words, Lest any of you should seem to come short of it; you have three particulars:

First, The Persons that must avoid this dreadful danger, in these words, Any of you; It is very observable here, how jealous the Apostle is of these Hebrews, lest any of them should prove Apostates and Backsliders, and fall off from their

profession and principles, and fo forfake the Promise, and by forsaking the Promise, should come short of eternal Rest; from whence you may take this Observation, or point of Dostrine:

In matters of soul-concernment, Christians should be very jealous, not only of themselves, but of others also.

Secondly, Observe the manner or extent of avoiding this dreadful danger, in this phrase, seem, lest any seem to come short of it; it is as if the Apostle should say, It is not enough for you to abstain from Apostacy and Back-sliding, which will tause your coming short of Heaven, but you must avoid the very seeming and appearance of it; it is not enough that you do not utterly fall away, but you must likewise take heed that you give no occasion to others to think that you are fallen away, or like to fall away; from whence you may observe this Doctrine:

That it is not enough for Christians to abstain from evil, but they must also abstain from the appearance of evil, and avoid the occasions of danger.

But I come to the third and last particular, in the last branch of the Text, which is indeed the most awakening and soul-shaking truth that you meet with in the whole Book of God; that is, the unconceivable damage, or unvaluable loss, that will fall upon them that do neglect the Apostles Premonition here, that is, that they shall come short of eternal life: lest any of you (saith he) should

[eem

feem to come short of it; or lest any of you should be deprived of that eternal Rest that is prepared for, and promifed to all those that do believe; so then. in this last particular, in the last branch of the Text, there is fomething implyed, and fomething expressed: that which is implyed, is this, That it · is possible for those that do profess the truth, to come short of heaven, or else the Apostle would not have fet down this Premonition here: and then that which is exprest, is this, That it is a most unvaluable and unconceivable lofs, to come short of Heaven; fo then from hence, there are these two points of Doctrine I shall commend to you; and truly, they are two very startling and awakening Truths, as by Gods affiftance you shall hear in the profecution of them; And the first Doctrine is this:

Doct. 1. That it is possible for many that profess the truth, and are consident that they are in a state of grace, and seem to come very near to Heaven; yet for all that to come short of Heaven.

Doct. 2. To come short of Heaven, or that eternal happiness which is prepared for the Saints in light, is a most dreadful, unconceivable, unvaluable, irrecoverable loss; a loss that should be trembled at by all sorts of persons what soever.

I begin with the first Doctrine, That it is possible for many that do profess the truth, or true Religion, and are consident that they do belong to God, and are in a state of Grace, and do seem to come very near to Heaven, yet for all that to come short of Heaven. This is a very awakening Truth;

but I shall by Gods affistance make it clear to you, and confirm it in the three Branches of it:

First, That it is possible for many Professors of the Truth, or true Religion, to come short of Heaven.

Secondly, That it is possible for many that are consident that they are in a state of Grace, to come short of Heaven.

Thirdly, That it is possible for many that come very near to Heaven, yet to come short of Heaven.

Ishall prove these three, and let your hearts go along with me; and oh, that you and I could follow the counsel of the Prophet Isaiah, To hear

the word of the Lord with trembling.

For the first, That it is possible for many that profess the Truth and true Religion, to come short of Heaven: I shall give you two instances for this: the Scribes and Pharises were those that professed the truth and true Religion, they sate in Moses Chair; our Saviour commanded his Disciples to hear them, because they opened the Law, they were Expounders of the Law: and our Saviour commanded his Disciples to hear them, although they should not do as they did: they professed the Truth and true Religion; and in the outward acts of Piety, these Scribes and Pharisees went exceeding far. I will shew you how far they went, in these six particulars:

First, They searched the Scriptures: they were very diligent in reading the Law of Moses: they gave themselves so much to the study of the Law, that they could tell exactly almost every verse in the five books of Moses: nay, they could tell you how often every letter in the Hebrem Alphabet was repeated in the Law of Moses: for example,

2

the Letter Aleph was repeated Three-hundred feventy-seven times in the five books of Moses.

Secondly, They were frequent in prayer; they prayed in the Streets, and in the Synagogue, and made long prayers for a pretence to devour Widows houses, Matth. 23. 14.

Thirdly, To Prayer, they added Fasting also: hear what one of them saith, Luke 18. 12, I fast twice in the week: and this he did for the taming

of the body.

Fourthly, They were very strict in the observation of the Sabbath, insomuch that they quarrelled with our Saviour because his Disciples did but pluck the ears of Corn upon the Sabbath day; nay, they were so superstitious in the observation of the Sabbath, that if one had got a thorn in his soot, they would not pull it out upon the Sabbath-day, for sear of breaking the Sabbath.

Fifthly, They were very industrious in teaching of others: they compassed Sea and Land to make a Proselyte, Matth. 23. 15: they would have taken any pains to win others to the same Sect or Reli-

gion with themselves.

Sixthly, They were very exact and unblameable

in their outward conversation; for,

1. They were free from more gross and scandalous sins which stare a man in the face: God, I thank thee (faith the Pharisee) that I am not as other men are: extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican, Luke 18. 11: Nay, they separated themselves from notorious sinners; they would not come into the company of Drunkards and Sabbath-breakers: they were of the strictest Religion amongst the Jews: their Religion was the most strait Sect, Acts 26. 5, which knew me from the

the beginning, if they would testisse, that after the most strait Sest of our Religion, I lived a Pharisee; insomuch that it was generally conceived among the Jews, that if there were but two men in all the world that should go to Heaven, a Scribe was one, and a Pharisee the other; and yet those Professors for all that, sell shortof Heaven; and our Saviour saith, That except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of hea-

ven, Matth. 5. 20.

Let me give you another example of the five foolish Virgins which you read of in Matth. 25: Our Saviour tells us , That five Virgins were wife, and five were foolish; By Virgins there, are meant Profesfors, and they are called Virgin-Professors, because they were not tainted or defiled with any grofs or scandalous fin; even those five foolish Virgins, they notwithstanding in their own opinion, and in the opinion of others, were waiting for the coming of the Bridegroom Christ; and yet for all this, those Virgin-professors fell short of Heaven, Matth. 25. 10, And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the Marriage, and the door was shut; the door of Heaven, the door of Mercy was shut against them; so you see the first Branch proved.

2. Let me prove the second Branch, That it is possible for many that are consident that they are in a state of Grace, and that they have an interest in, and belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, to come short of Heaven; in Matth. 7.22, 2;, Many will say to me in that day, (at the great day of Judgment) Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and in thy name have cast out Devils, and in

thy name have done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity. Mark, how confident they are; have we not prophesied in thy name, and cast out Devils in thy name? We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, Luke 13.26: To whom Jefus Christ will fay, Depart from me ye that work iniquity: get you out of my sight, I cannot abide to look upon you; these were confident, What a deal of confidence express they! as if they had been as really acquainted with Jesus Christ, as any were; Lord, Lord, have not we prophesied in thy name, &c? Again, in Rom. 2. 17, 18, 19, the Apostle speaks there to that boasting Jew, Thou restest in the Law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law, and art confident that thou thy self art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness; an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes: which hast the form of knowledg, and of the truth in the Law; thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou nor thy felf? Such a one as teacheth others, and teacheth not himself, such a one is stark naught, fo that it is possible for a man to be a teacher of others, and confident of coming to Heaven, and yet for all that come fhort of it; that's the fecond Branch. I briog ! onl

3. Let me prove the third branch of the Docarine, That it is possible for men to come very near to Heaven, and yet for all that to come short of Heaven. Let me give you some Examples for that: This was the case of the young man in the Gospel, which you read of, Matth. 19 20, 21, when our Saviour bid him to keep the Commandments:

ments: saith he, Lord, all these things I have kept from my youth up; the meaning is this, as to his outward conversation he was unblameable: he came fo near Heaven, that as St. Mark relates the story, Mar. 10. 21, Jesus beholding him, loved him; that is, he looked upon him in a very friendly manner, and pitied him, that fuch a one should come so near to Heaven, and yet come short of it, by resting on his own felf-righteousness; he came near Heaven, but yet he came short of it: so Herod came near Heaven, Mar. 6. 20, he heard John Baptist gladly, and he did many things that John Baptist bid him, and yet he came short of it. So you read of a Scribe, Mar. 12. 34, that answered very discreetly to our Saviour; our Saviour tells him, Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God, and yet he came short of it; What a sad thing was that! So Agrippa, Almost thou perswadest me to be a Christian, Act. 26. 28; but yet he was not a whole Christian; so he came near to Heaven, but yet he came short of Heaven. But here it may be demanded :

Quest. But how far then may a man go on in the profession of the truth and true Religion, and yet come

(hort of Heaven?

To this I answer, Truly a Professor may go so far, that the hearing of it may make some of you tremble, and to fay, What will become of me Now I shall shew you that in three particulars:

A man may have,

1. A very glorious shew of grace and holines, and yet have no true grace at all.

2. Admirable gifts, and parts, and qualifications, and yet have no true

grace at all.

3. Some superficial beginnings, and tasts of Grace and Holiness, and yet have no truth of Grace, but come short of Heaven.

First, A man may have a very glorious shew of holiness, and yet have no true grace, and so come short of Heaven; he may have something like grace; as in a Garden, Weeds may be so like good Herbs, that it may be hard to know one from the other: a man may have such a shew of grace, that he may be thought to have grace in truth: Let me give you instances in these four particulars:

First, A man may be a fair civil carriaged man, very innocent and inoffensive in his conversation; one that doth not oppose the Gospel, nor oppose the Truth; this is something. Some there are that are Lions, of whom David complains, Psalm 57.4, My soul is among Lions, and I lye even among them that are set on sire. Some there are that have Lion-like Spirits, whose hearts are all set on fire: that would overthrow Magistrates and Ministers, and Sabbaths, and Ordinances, and all; it is something for a man to be civil and inosfensive in his carriage, that he is no Enemy to the Gospel.

Secontly, A man may be a frequenter of Ordinances! and a man may be a countenancer of Religion, and an owner of Magistracy and Ministry, and yet all this while have but a shew of grace, and no true grace at all. In Luke 13. 26, 27, there you have some that will say to our Say viour, Lord, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and we have beard thee teach in our freets.

There

There are many that frequent Ordinances, that come to the Affemblies of Gods people day after day, and wait upon God in the use of his Ordinances: some that honour the Ministers of God, and yet for all that come short of Heaven.

Thirdly, They may go farther; they may be maintainers and supporters of Ministers, both by their Persons and Purses: and thus it was with Ananias and Sapphira: they went and sold their possissions, and laid them down at the Apostles feet, and

yet come short of Heaven.

Fourthly, They may go fo far, not only to have a good opinion of themselves, but they may gain the good opinion of others: Nay, they may be well thought of by those that are men of judgment; those that are godly may think well of them, that they are real Saints, and that their names are written in the book of life, as is meant by that Scripture, in Psalm 69.28, where David faith, Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous; It cannot fo be understood, that a man that hath once his name written in the book of Life, can have it blotted out: but the meaning is this, Blot them out of the book of Life, that is, discover their names were never written in that book; discover them to be but Hypocrites, though they carry themselves fo fairly, that for the present others do think that their names are written in the book of Life; Judas carried the matter fo fair, that the rest of the Difciples questioned themselves, rather than Judas: Master, is it I ? faith one of them; Master, is it 1? faith another; they never dreamed that Judas should betray their Master. Simon Magus carried the matter fo fair, that Philip, that was one

of the Deacons, reckoned him to be a true Believer, and was baptized, and continued with *Philip*. This is the first particular, That a man may have glorious shews of grace and holiness, and yet have no true grace at all.

Secondly, The second thing is to shew, that a man may have admirable gifts and parts, and qualifications that are like to grace, and yet are not

true grace. For example:

A man may have an admirable gift in Preaching: he may be a very able Preacher, having a very acute and quick Invention: a profound Judgment, a retentive Memory, a clear Elocution: Judas, I make no question, was as good a Preacher as the rest of the eleven Apostles; a man may preach to others, and yet he himself in the mean while be a cast-away; Oh we that are Preachers, we may preach against Pride with proud hearts: against Covetousness with covetous hearts: press Self-denial with felf-feeking hearts: press Repentance with impenitent hearts: we may preach these things, and yet not feel them at all in our own hearts: So, a man may have an admirable gift in Prayer (I do not fay the grace of Prayer), there is a great deal of difference between the gift and the grace of Prayer; the gift of Prayer makes a man proud, the grace of Prayer makes a man humble: the gift of Prayer abounds in outward expressions, the grace of Prayer confifts in inward impressions upon the heart; the gift of Prayer vents its self in publick, but the grace of Prayer is most enlarged in private; the gift of Prayer makes a man pray in his own strength, but the grace of Prayer makes a man pray in the strength of Jesus Christ; the gift of Prayer makes a man expect an eccho of praise

praise from men, but the grace of Prayer expects only the approbation of God; the gift of prayer that may be lost, but the grace of Prayer is never lost; I say, a man may have admirable gifts in Prayer, excellent Expressions, and seeming impressions upon the heart: some may pray like Saints, and in the mean time live like Devils. I am consident this deceives many: Some there are that have sine voluble Tongues in Prayer, that a man would think them to be Angels in prayer: but look into their lives, and O how crooked are

they in their paths and conversation?

So, A man may have the gift of Government, fo much prudence and policy: a man may be such a deep Polititian, that he may be able to ballance the affairs of a Kingdom, and yet have no grace at all; that was the case of Achitophel: he was so prudent and politick in his counsels, that he was esteemed as an Oracle of God, 2 Sam. 16. 23. And yet for all this, such a one may come short of Heaven; and that may be said to those men that have those parts, and gifts, and qualifications, and are not sanctified; that have the gifts of preaching, and praying, and Government, which was said to Simon Magus, Thy money perish with thee; so they and their gifts, and parts, and qualifications perish with them.

Thirdly, Again, you shall see in another particular, how far Professors may go, and yet come short of Heaven; namely, he may have some superficial beginnings and tasts of grace and holiness, and yet have no truth of grace; and so come short of Heaven; let me shew you this in these sour

particulars:

t. He may be able to give his affent to the

truth; he may confent to this truth, That the Bible is the word of God, and that he believes it is so; so Simon Magus did, Alts 8. 13, the Text saith, that he believed.

2. He may have so much knowledg as may move his affections with joy, that he may rejoyce in the word that he knows: thus the Pharises, They rejoyced in John Baptists light for a season, John 5. 35. And it is said of the second ground in the Parable, that they received the word with joy, Luke 8. 13. And God speaks of the Hypocrites, Isa. 58. 2, Tet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a Nation that did rigteousness, and for sook not the Ordinance of their God: they ask of me the Ordinances of Justice, they take delight in approaching to God; and yet all this, it was but like a Land-slood that is quickly dryed up: or like a stash of lightning which quickly passeth away.

3. He may have such a tast and superficial beginning of grace, that he may be moved so much at a Sermon, as to have some kind of purpose and resolution of amendment of life, 1 Sam. 26. 21, you may read there that wicked wretch and Hypocrite Saul had sometimes good purposes and resolutions: Then said Saul, I have sinned; Return my son David, for I will no more do the harm; he was convinced in his conscience, that it was out of malice that he did persecute that innocent Servant of God; so it may be you may have some Drunkard, when he lyes under the smarting Rod of Gods displeasure, to vow that he will never be drunk more.

4. A man may have this tast and superficial beginning of grace, that he may attain to some external reformation; he may ascape the pollutions of the world through the knowledg of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 2. 20. A natural carnal man, an Hypocrite, may get so much soap out of the Word of God, as may wash his outside, but yet he may return to the mire again, because he is a Swine still: he may be washed like a Hog on the outside, but yet he is a Swine still: Hypocrites may abstain from many sins out of a slavish fear, and perform duties out of by-respects; Jezzabel sasted, the Pharisees prayed, and gave alms; Felix feared and trembled, here was the beginnings and tasts of grace; these tasted of the heavenly gift: Heb. 6. 4; they had a tast of the water of life, but they spit it out again.

But then it may be demanded, What is the reafon that a Professor may go so far in the ways of Christianity, and yet come short of Heaven?

For answer, I shall give you reasons for all

these three particulars:

First, A Professor may go thus far in the way to Heaven, and yet come short of Heaven, for these two reasons:

1. Because there is some failing in his profession; his profession wants either root or sincerity, or

love to Jefus Chrift.

It may be his profession wants root: he hath taken up the profession of Religion, but he was never yet humbled; the Plow of humiliation never went deep enough: he was never convinced of the indispensible need that he hath of Christ, to say, Give me Christ, or I dye; he was never convinced of the evil of sin, of the burden of sin, of the loathsome nature of sin, of the Hell that is in every sin.

Or it may be he wants Sincerity, he takes up ReliReligion for by-ends, or for felf-interest, or it may be he follows Christ for the Loaves: for indeed there are but sew that follow Christ for Christs sake. It was the complaint of Austin, Fessus seldom sought for Jesus sake. And as God complains, Zech. 7.5, When ye fasted and mourned, did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me? Ephraim is an empty Vine, bringing forth fruit unto himself, Hos. 10.1.

Or it may be, his profession wants love; now love is an inward principle; and where the inward principle of love is in the heart, there profession never fails, Ephes. 6. 24, Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. But now, it may be outwardly he hath some love to Jesus Christ, as the Prophet Ezekiel speaks of his Hearers, or God to him concerning them: Son of Man, the children of thy people come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but will not do them: for with their mouths they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness, Ezek. 33. 30, 31. And the Lord Christ may fay to them, just as Dalilah said to Sampson, How canst thou say thou lovest me, when thy heart is not with me? Judg. 16. 15. That is one Reason.

2. A fecond is this: Men may go fo far in the way to Heaven, and yet come short of it; because though they have an outward lamp of profession, yet they have no oyl in their lamps: that is, no reality; they have not that faith that works by love: they have not that repentance which teacheth them more mortification, which crucisieth the sless; these are the Reasons of the sirst Branch.

Secondly, It may be demanded, How comes it to pass, that men may be so consident that they

are in a state of grace, and yet come short of

The reason is this, because of their own felfflattery, and felf-delusion: They think themselves something when they are nothing, and so deceive themselves: they think themselves rich, and increased in goods, and stand in need of nothing; whereas they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. They think they have grace, when indeed they have none; they think their Grace is true, when it is but counterfeit; they think their faith is true Faith, when it is but Fancy; they think their Repentance is true Repentance, when it is but Worldly-forrow; they think their obedience is true Obedience, when it is but Hypocrifie. It may be they take Civility for Sanctity, and natural parts for true Piety: it may be they take Restraining-grace for Renewinggrace, and so they are deceived in their spiritual Estates. Thousands there are that deceive themfelves in this particular.

Thirdly, It may be demanded: But how comes it to pass that it is possible for men to come near to

Heaven, and yet come short of Heaven?

For answer to this, I shall give you but two Reasons:

First, Men come near Heaven, and yet come short of Heaven, because they will not come up to the price; I do not mean the price of merit; I abhor that opinion, to think that we can merit Heaven; but my meaning is this, they do not come up to the price of means: though nothing can be done by way of merit, yet much must be done in the use of means: my meaning is, they will not do that which Jesus Christ would have them do:

they will not fuffer that which must be suffered; they will not forsake that which must be forsaken.

1. They will not do that which Jesus Christ would have them do; for Example, they will not walk exactly, they will not renew their repentance; they will not set about the work of God with all their might, and mind, and strength; they will not work out their salvation with sear and trembling; there is much to be done, many duties to be done from a right principle, in a right manner, and to a right end.

2. They will not suffer that which is to be suffered; our Saviour saith, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me: You must be content to bear his Cross, as well as to wear his Crown: Now this they will

not do.

Again, They will not for fake that which must be forsaken; our Saviour saith, a man must part with his right-eye, and right-hand, any thing that stands in opposition to, or that comes in competition with him. Now men will not do, they will not fuffer, they will not forfake what Christ would have them: It fares with them as with a pedling Chapman, who likes a Commodity well. but he will not come up to the price of it; men are willing to do fomething, but they will not do fo much as is required: they will not proportion their labour according to their work, they will not make up the hedg according to the breach. This is certain, many there are that come short of Heaven, because they do not use the utmost of their endeavours, for the profecution of the end; many come short of Heaven, because of their flight endeavours in the way of heaven, Luke 13, Strive

Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able; What is the reason? they only seek, but do not strive; It is not enough for you to seek to enter in at the strait gate, unless you strive, and you must strive as in an Agony; so the word a various,

fignifies in the Original.

Secondly, A second reason is this, Why some men come so near Heaven, and yet come short of Heaven, Because of their Apostacy: they begin in the spirit, and end in the sless; you did run well, who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth? Gal. 5.7. You do not obey it constantly, you are not steady and sirm in the truth, but you are starting aside like a broken bow; falling from the truth in their prosession, and in their practice of Religion: These are the reasons why men come near Heaven, and yet come short of Heaven. And thus I have proved the Point in the three Branches of it. Now what use shall we make of it?

what terrour may this strike into the hearts of all those who are only Nominal Christians, that have a name only to live, and in the mean time are dead; that have a form of Godliness, but are as great strangers to the power of it, as Pagans are to the profession of it! Oh what terrour may this strike into the hearts of all you that come short of those that come short of Heaven! and if you come short of those that come short of heaven, what will become of you? For example, May a man be a frequenter of the Word of God? May a man make conscience of keeping the Sabbath? I mean, for the external observation of it: May a man be a

countenancer of Religion and yet comedbort of Heaven? then what will become of them that neglect Qidinances? What will become of them to whom the Word of the Lord is a burden? The word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, they have no delight in it, Jer. 16. 10. And what will become of them that fay of the fervice of the Lord. What a weariness is it? Mal. 1. 13. What a weariness is it to wait on God, and to hear Sermons? If a min may be a Believer, and yet come fhort of Heaven, I mean, a temporary Believer, to believe for a while; then what will become of them that believe not at all? believe none of the Precepts of God to obey them? nor the promises, to embrace them, nor the threatnings to tremble at them; If a man have outward reformation, and yet come thort of Heaven; What then will become of them that have no reformation at all, that wallow in the mire of their fins? What will become of Lyars, and Swearers, and Drunkards. The Pharifees were no friends to those gross fins, and yet they came short of Heaven. Oh that this might awaken all those that are vet asleep in their fins, that are rocke in the Davils Cradle, and that do not understand their own condition! May a man have natural parts and qualifications, and yet come short of Heaven? What will become of them that are Sots in matters of Religion, that have not obtained to their A B C in Religion, but are ignorant of the fundamentals of Religion? May a man have some superficial tasts and beginnings of grace, and give his affent to the truths of the Gospel? May he receive the word of God with joy? May he be moved at a Sermon, and have a resolution to obey, and reform many things,

things, and yet come short of Heaven? then how doleful and dreadful is their condition, that have no affection to, nor no delight in the Word of the Lord? that have no purpoles of new and better obedience; but they come to hear the Word out of Formality and Custom, and not to get any spiritual advantage to their own souls: Oh! if this were feriously thought upon, it would make Sinners to look about them, and to fall down at the feet of God, and fay, Lord, what will become

of me! Lord, what will become of me!

Use 2. Of Exhortation. I shall close this Point with a word of Exhortation. If it is poffible for many that profess the Truth and true Religion, and are confident that they are in a state of grace, and feem to come very near to Heaven, and yet for all that to come short of it; then as you love your God, as you love your Souls, as you love your Peace, as you defire to appear with comfort before your Judg, rest not in any bare outward profession; rest not in a naked name of Religion: Be not contented that you have the Lamps of Profession, unless you have the Oyl of faving Grace. Confider, what advantage will it be for you to come near to heaven, to come to the brow of the hill, as it were, and afterwards to drop down into hell! What advantage will it be' for a man to be lifted up to heaven, and not lifted up into heaven! it is the greatest curse that can possibly be expressed. Oh what a cutting Corrosive, what a gnawing Worm will this be to all Eternity, for a man to fay, I came near to Heaven, to the top of the Hill, and yet I fell short of those glorious hopes that are laid up for the Saints in light: Q what a stinking Cockatrice will this be

to them that have but a bare naked name of Reli-

gion, an outward profession only.

It may be thou art no Swearer, nor Lyar, nor Sabbath breaker, but it may be thou art a covetous wretch, over head and ears in the world, tumbling up and down in dirt and clay, as if there were no other happiness but here below: It may be thou art but a formal Christian; it may be thou art but a picture that hath hands and eyes, but no legs: it may be thou haft eyes, but no feet to run the ways of Gods Commandments: It may be, it may be faid of some of you young men that hear me this day, what was faid of the young man in the Gospel, You are not far from the Kingdom of God; what will this advantage you, if you do not follow Jesus Christ fully, and obey him sincerely, that you may enjoy him eternally! O that my counsel this day were accepted by you; in the fear of the Lord give no rest to your eyes, nor flumber to your eye-lids, until you can fay, Bleffed be God, I am more than the best Hypocrite in the world; though he can outstrip me in shew, vet for the infide I outstrip him. But it may be you will fay, What is this infide of Christianity, this effential Religion, wherein you would have us outstrip Hypocrites, and those that come short of Heaven?

I will tell you in three words : To the Effentials of Christianity; there are these things re-

quired:

I. Union with Christ. 2. Renewing Grace.

3. A Compliance with the Will of Christ.

First, Union with Christ: Till you are united to him, you have no interest in him, nor benefit

by him; therefore look to this, that you have the Spirit of God to unite you to the Lord Jefus Christ: Our Saviour faith, John 15.4, As the branch cannot bear fruit of it felf, except it abide in the Vine. To neither can you bring forth fruit, unless you abide in me. O labour for this Union: when the Soul is once united to him, then it hath communion with him, in his life, in his death, in his refurrection, in his intercession, in his graces, and comforts, and all. What is that which knits the Ciftern to the Fountain? You know it is the Leaden Pipe, that is it that is the conveyance from the Conduit head to the Ciftern : fo here; What is it that knits thy Soul to Jefus Christ, that thou mayst be continually partaking of him; who is the Fountain of light, and life, and peace, and confolation? What is it but this Pipe, the Union that is between Christ and the foul? Now a Hypocrite hath not this Union, he is not united to Christ: it may be he bears the name of Christ, but never was ingrafted into him: it may be he is tyed to Christ by the thred of an outward profession, as the Seions is tied to the stock, but yet he is not ingrafted into the stock.

Secondly, It confifts in renewing Grace: If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, 2 Cor. 5. 17. An Hypocrite may have many trinkets and bables, as we fay; I, but a Regenerate man, he brings forth one Tewel worth ten thousand of them: An Hypocrite may have restraining grace; but a truly Regenerate man, he is renewed in the fpirit of his mind: he hath a new name, which I spake of in fo many Sermons, the white Stone, and the new Name, Rev. 3.

Thirdly, This Essence of Christianity, consists

in a total compliance with the Will of Christ; he that is a true Believer, a true Regenerate man, an inside Christian, he can say, Lord, not my will, but thy will be done; Lord, Rule in me as thou pleasest, so I may be but thine; take possession of my heart, and dispossess sin and Satan: he will say, Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none

upon earth that I desire besides thee.

But now an Hypocrite, it may be he gives up his name to Jesus Christ in profession, but he doth not give up his heart to Christ in subjection and submission: it is one thing to give up the name to Christ, and another thing to give up the heart to Christ; when you give up the key of the Castle to Christ, then you will say, Lord, I will do what thou wouldst have me do, and suffer what thou wouldst bave me suffer, and for sake what thou wouldst have me for sake, there is nothing I have, though it be as dear to me as my right hand, and right eye, but I will part with it at thy command.

To shut up all, If you would not come short of them that come short of Heaven, then rest not in a bare profession, in a bare naked name of Christianity; labour to be united to Christ, labour for renewing Grace: labour to give up your selves to Jesus Christ; let there be a compliance in your

will to the will of Christ.

Again, If many may be confident that they are in a state of Grace, and yet come short of Heaven; O then take heed of self-delusion, and self-slattery, to think your selves something when you are nothing, and so deceive your own souls: It is better a thousand times for a man to think himself nothing when he is something, than to think himself something when he is nothing; faith the Apostle,

postle, 1 Cor! 15. 10, I have laboured more abundantly than they all, and yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Beg earnestly of God that you may know the worst of your selves, and the best of Jesus Christ; and pray, O Lord, let me not be deceived in this great business of Eternity; let me not goto hell with vain hopes of Heaven.

Thirdly, May a matroome near to Heaven, and yet come short of it? O then take heed of these

two fins, Slothfulnels and Apollacy.

Take heed of Slothfulness: Be not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Rom. 12. 11. The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force, Matth. 11.
12. Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure; set to the work with all your might, put your whole strength to the work: shake offall drowsiness and dulness.

And then take heed of Apostacy: this makes many that come near to Heaven, to come flort of Heaven, because they do not hold out to the end: He that endures to the said shall be saved; blessed are they who notwith anding all difficulties and discouragements that they meet with in Heavens way, are resolved to hold out to the end, and in the end. Thus I have dispatcht the first Doctrine, That it is possible for many that profess the Truth, and are consident that they are in a State of Grace, and seem to come near to Heaven, and yet for all that to come short of Heaven.

Now I come to the second Doctrine in this last Branch of my Text, from these words; Come short

of it. And the Doctrine is this :

To come short of eternal Rest, is such an unvaluable and unconscivable, and irrecoverable loss, that it is to be trembled at, by all sorts of persons what soever.

It is a loss to be trembled at by all those that have not quite lost their sense and feeling. For the confirmation of this truth, there are these two Queries I shall speak to:

First, What it is to come short of this eternal

Reft.

Secondly, How it may appear that this coming short of Heaven, is such an unvaluable, irrecoverable,

and unconceivable loss.

For the first, What it is to come short of this eternal rest; What is it? Oh! God grant that neither you, nor I, nor any foul here present, may ever experimentally know what it is to come short of Godseternal rest; let me shew you what it is, that you may avoid this dreadful danger; The Original word here used, is organizate, and it signifies to come too late, just as those five foolish Virgins that had no oyl in their Lamps, they came and knockt, Lord, Lord, faid they, open to us : but the door of Mercy was shut, they came too late; Matth. 25. 10, 11. It fignifies likewise to fail of that which a man expects, Heb. 12.15, Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God. Or it fignifies this, for a man to miss the Gole or Prize that he runs for, and so it is a Metaphor from runners in a Race: if they be heavy, or lumpish, or careless, they lose the Prize, they miss the Gole; So Christians that are secure, and careless, and flothful, and mind every thing more than that one thing that is necessary; they come too late, they fail

fail of Grace and Glory, they mis the Gole, they lose the Prize, they are deprived of that eternal happiness they expected: this is to come short of this eternal Rest.

Secondly, It may be demanded, How will it appear that this coming short of eternal Rest, is such an unvaluable, unconceivable, and irrevocable loss, that it is to be trembled at?

I answer, It will appear by these three reasons :

They that come flort of Heaven, 2. The Favour ternal happiness.

The Prefence Of God in e-ternal happiness.

First, They that comeshort of this Eternal Rest, they lose the presence of God; how great, how unconceivably great this loss is, it passeth my skill to tell you: But conceive it thus: David tells us, in Pfalm 16. ult. In his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore. Now, if in the presence of God be the fulness of joy, then certainly in the want of his presence, is the fulness of misery? If at his right hand are pleasures for evermore, then certainly at his left hand is wo, and misery, and calamity for evermore: even fuch misery as the Prophet Ezekiel speaks of, Ezek. 2. ult. A roll of a book was written within and without, lamentations, and mourning, and wo: And it stands with reason it should be fo; for, if God be light, then a separation from God must needs be darkness; If God be life, then a feparation from God must needs be death; If God be the fountain of Bliss, then the separation from

from him must needs be the possession of all mifery, and wo, and calamity, and diffress, that can possibly be expressed or conceived. This punishment of loss, in the opinion of all Divines, doth incomparably torment the foul, more than all the punishment, and tortures, and torments of Hellfire: Nay, the loss of that heavenly and unconceivable lov, the loss of one hours communion with the crowned Saints in glory, the loss of one glimple of the glorified Body of Jesus Christ, is a greater and far more and confiderable lofs, than the loss of all the Kingdoms of the World besides: I know that carnal men have very carnal conceits of Heaven and happiness, because they look usually upon heaven and spiritual things with carnal eyes: but if they did but look upon them with fuch an eye as Mofes did, Heb. 11.27, By the eye of Faith he saw him that was invisible: if they would not look upon things that are feen, but upon things that are not feen; For, the things that. arn feen are themporal, but the things that are not feen are spiritual and eternal, as faith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 4. 18. If they could but look upon them with spiritual eyes, then they would acknowledg, that a thousand thousand rendings of the body from the foul, are far less than one rending of the foul from God. It was the speech of one Nicostratus, a curious Painter, to one that admired at him for looking fo wishfully upon a curious Picture; Oh, said he, if thou hadst but my eyes, thou wouldst admire what I admire; so may I say to men that will not now believe that the loss of Gods prefence is fuch a loss; hadft thou but spiritual eyes, thou wouldst acknowledg the truth of what I now fay, That the loss of Gods presence is such a loss

as can never, never, be fufficiently bewailed, no not with tears of blood. It was the speech of Chryfostom, and it was a favoury speech; I hadrather endure a thousand Hells, than to hear that one dreadful fentence. Depart ye curfed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels: And fuitable to this was the speech of Augustine, I could be contented to endure the torments of Hell for a while, So I might but see the glorified body of Jesus Christ in Heaven; for you know what our Saviour faith. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, John 17.24. The fight of Christs glory in heaven, is that which makes heaven to be Heaven. It was a good speech of Luther, Heaven without Gods presence, would be but as a Box without a Jewel. Now if this Beatifical Vision, as it is called, the beholding of the glory of Christ in Heaven, be such a happiness; Oh what is it to be excluded and thrust out from the glorified presence of Christ, never to see his face! You know when Saint Paul told the Disciples at Ephelus, Acts 20. 25, 38, And now behold shat ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. This cut them to the heart, this occasioned so much forrowing and fadness, because he faid, You shall see my face no more: Now if that were matter of fo much fadness, never to see the Apostles face more; Oh, what will it be, when Jesus Christ shall say to such an one, Thou shalt never see my face; Go thou curfed wretch, get thee away from me: go to Hell, to the Devil and damned spirits: there, shall be thy portion for ever and ever! This is the first Reason, to shew how unvaluable, how

how unconceivable this loss is; the coming short

of Heaven is the loss of Gods presence.

2. The fecond Reason is this: They that come Thort of Heaven, as they lofe the presence of God, fo they lose the favour, love, mercy and compasfion of God; the favour of God is better than life, Pfalm 63. 3, Because thy loving-kindness is better than life; my lips shall praise thee; because when this life is gone, the favour of God towards his Elect will last to all eternity, therefore it is better than life; but they that come short of Heaven, lose this favour of God; all pity, all mercy, all compassion, all hope of favour shall then be utterly taken away; God will be fo far from shewing favour to them, that he will laugh at their destruction, and mock when their fear cometh as de-Solation, and their destruction as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon them, as it is Prov. 1. 26, 27: They shall lose not only the favour of God, but the favour of all their Friends that they have enjoyed here upon earth: they shall lofe the favour of their Fathers and Mothers, of Hufbands and Wives, and Children and bosom-Friends: for although they were nearly related to them, yet if they come to heaven, and themselves excluded, those glorified Saints that are in heaven, will abandon them with deteftation and derision; nay, they will rejoyce in their destruction, and in the execution of Gods justice and vengeance upon them, Pfal. 58. 10, The righteous shall rejoyce when he feeth the vengeance; a glorified Father in Heaven shall rejoyce in the destruction and condemnation of a damned Son; a glorified Yoke-fellow in Heaven shall rejoyce in the destruction and damnation of fuch a Yoke-fellow as is condemned:

ed: No prayers, no tears, no fobs nor supplications, no cryings to the mountains to fall upon them, shall one whit avail: there shall be no Mediator, none in heaven or earth to plead for them. or to fpeak one word on their behalf. This is the fecond Reason, They that come short of Heaven, lose the favour of God.

They that come short of Heaven, as they lose the presence of God, and the favour of God; so they lose the fruition of God, the enjoyment of God in eternal happiness; they lose a Crown that is incorruptible, undefiled, that fades not away, that is reserved for the Saints in light: they lose an inheritance, an everlafting inheritance: If the loss of an earthly comfort (suppose it be of a dear Wife, or hopeful Child, or a bosom Friend, or an outward Estate of an Inheritance of a thousand pounds a year: if the loss of a stately House, or the loss of a rich Ship at Sea) doth many times fo affect a man, that it goes to his very heart; you know what Jacob faid, If Benjamin be taken away, my dearly beloved fon Benjamin, then faid he, shall I go to my grave mourning; my gray hairs will be brought with forrow to the grave, Gen. 42. 38. If an earthly lofs, the lofs of an earthly comfort, do so affect and afflict a man, O what will the loss of an everlasting Kingdom, of everlasting Glory, of everlafting Happiness, of those everlafting Pleasures that are at the right hand of God, which eye hath not feen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive; O how will this loss torture and torment the foul, and make fuch a one cry out in anguish and extream bitterness, Oh cursed beast that I was, to me was the Gospel preacht in power and purity; I lived

174 Fear of missing Salvation, or,

in a City where heavenly Manna was dropping down every day, on the week-day as well as on the Lords day; to me was Jesus Christ proffered in all his beauty and imbroidery: nay, the Ministers of the Gospel did woe me, intreat me, invite me, and befeech me, as if Tefus Christ himself had been upon his knees, befeeching me to be reconciled; to me was Salvation tendred, but I neglected all, I flighted all, and now must I for ever endure those torments that might have been escaped, and must for ever be deprived of those joys that might have been gained: I might have been what now I am not; O that I might be any thing rather than what I now am: O that I might be a Toad, or a Serpent, or any thing, or nothing! The confideration therefore of this loss, the loss of happiness, the loss of such a happiness, the loss of an eternal happiness, will rend the caul of their hearts in a thousand thousand pieces: the tears of hell will not be sufficient to bewail the loss of Heaven, especially if you take in but these three aggravations of this loss.

I. They that lose this eternal happiness, shall look upon others that have gained it; they shall look upon the Saints and Servants of Christ that are now in joy in that unconceivable Glory, whereof themselves come short, and this will be an eternal Corrosive to their consciences; so saith our Saviour, Luke 13. 28, There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you your selves thrust out; All the blessed Saints and Servants of God, received into Heaven, and themselves shut out: that is one aggravation.

2. Take

2. Take in this aggravation also, That this loss of eternal happiness, is ever accompanied with the punishment of fense; if it were only a punishment of loss, it was a dreadful punishment, but the punishment of loss never goes alone: they that lose Heaven, must have Hell for their portion: they must have those unconceivable tortures and torments, which infinitely surpass the capacity and comprehension of such poor creatures as we are: Alas! we know not what it is to lye under the burden of Gods wrath: when Mountains and Milstones of wrath are thrown upon the soul, and the Lord will so far enable the soul, that it shall be bearing that wrath, and bearing, and bearing it to all Eternity.

3. Take in this aggravation also: This loss it is irrecoverable, once lost, and ever lost: Heaven once lost will never, never be recovered; after as many millions of years as there are drops in the Ocean, that loss will still be bewailed, and bewailed, and bewailed to all Eternity. If you put all these together, I believe you will assent to me now, and acknowledg the truth of this point; That to come short of Heaven, is such an unvaluable, and unconceivable, and irrecoverable loss, that it is to be trembled at by all sorts of persons what soever:

For the use of this point,

First, By way of Information.

Secondly, By way of Exhortation:

First, By way of Information: It shews us the extream folly and madness of all impenitent Sinners, who will venture the loss of God, and the favour of God; the loss of Christ, and the presence of Christ; the loss of heaven and happiness, and the loss of their own souls, rather than they will

will lose the pleasures of sin, which are but for a feafon: it is such a madness, that heaven and earth may stand amazed at it! Consider, and befool your felves, O you carnal and careless ones, if you have not finned away your very fense and reason also: Consider, blush, and be ashamed, and be confounded in the presence of the Lord this day; you that never yet fet your faces towards Heaven, you that never made it your business to look out for a Christ: you that never shed a penitential tear from a broken heart; you that cannot abide to think of Humiliation and Repentance; you that never fought for eternal happiness by patient continuance in well-doing; you that know not what it is to mortifie a luft: you that know not what it is to deny your own hearts any thing, to cross your own wills in any thing : you that are so far from working out your own salvation with fear and trembling, that you work out your own damnation without fear and trembling, without horror and aftonishment: that never once think of it, that never once lay to heart this loss, this coming short; I cannot, if I had the tongue of men and Angels, I were not able to express the evil of coming short of eternal happiness; 'you can now fell Glory for vanity; Heaven for Earth; the pleasures that are at the right hand of God, for the pleasures of sin that are but for a season: But the time will come, when with heart-rending complaints, you will tear off your own hair, and rend your own hearts in pieces, and cry out, O fools, beaftly fools, fenfless fots that we were, to bereave our selves of eternal happiness, for a little momentany pleasures, for the satisfaction of a base lust! O what Bedlams, O what humane beafts

beafts were we, that would deprive our felves of mansions in the New Ferusalem, for a few bruitish carnal fenfual delights! O what mad-men were we, that would venture the loss of an eternal habitation in that place, where to be, and to be most happy, is all one! rather than we would cross our own carnal and corrupt wills in any thing we would fulfil the flesh, and the mind: O how will you then exceedingly befool your felves? It is floried of Lysimachus a King, being pursued by his Enemies, and being very thirsty, he fold his Kingdom for a draught of drink; but afterward he cryed out, Alas, What a bargain have I made, to fell my Kingdom for a draught of drink! O this, even this, is the condition of all you that fell Heaven for Earth, that fell Pearls for Pebles, that fell your immortal Souls, that fell the hopes of eternal happiness, for the satisfaction of a base luft: O how will you ery out, What a Bedlambeaft have I been, that have run fuch a hazzard, the loss of fuch a Crown, an incorruptible Crown, fuch a Crown of eternal Glory! O what a beaft have I been, that have ventured the loss of Heaven, and the favour of God, and the presence of God, and the loss of my own Soul, and that for nothing, for toys and trifles, for drofs and trash! You can now complain of the Service of God, and fay, It is an unprofitable Service; What profit is it to wait upon the Lord? what profit is it that we kept his Ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts? Mal. 3. 14. But a time will come, when you will wish that ? thousand years had been spent in fasting, and ten thousand thousand years had been spent in the Brickelt Exercise of Religion, rather than you should

should have come short of that eternal happiness; you now are ready to fay, when the Ministers press you to pray in your Families, and catechise your Families, and read the Scriptures in your Families, and to drive a Trade for Heaven: when we press you to these things, you are ready to fay, We have no leisure: alas, we cannot look after these things, we have no time to seek heaven and happiness: No time! Well, well, you that can find no time to look after those things that are of infinite concernment; you that have no time to feek for Heaven, you will have time enough to bewail the loss of Heaven, when a thoufand years are gone, and ten thousand years are gone, and a thousand, thousand, thousand years are gone in bewailing your loss, bewailing this unconceivable damage and detriment: when as many millions of years are gone as there are drops of water in the Ocean, there will be time enough to bewail it to all eternity; O the folly and madness of all those that will live in fin, and lye in fin; and for the pleasures of fin, will venture the loss of those pleasures that are at the right hand of God for evermore! it is fuch madnels as cannot be expressed or conceived. That is one Use.

Secondly, By way of Exhortation: And I have two Exhortations to tender to you, if God would give you but hearts to hearken: and the Lord of his infinite mercy bow and incline your hearts to

consider what I say.

First, If the coming short of this eternal Rest, be fuch an unconceivable loss: Then, foresee this danger, and tremble at it, tremble at the apprehension of it; if you be flesh and blood, tremble at it: Think with your felves, certainly there

will come a day, when a final Sentence must pass upon my foul, either a fentence of Absolution, or a fentence of Condemnation: if the fentence of Condemnation, Depart from me thou cursed wretch, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, Matth. 25.41. If that should be the final Sentence that should pass upon me, what would become of me! As God speaks to the unrighteous Judg, Isa. 10. 3, And what will you do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which will come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? So fay I to thee: What wilt thou do in the day when that sentence passeth upon thee? Whither wilt thou flee for help? O the weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, that this coming short of Heaven will produce; especially when thou shalt consider, that God was every day dealing with thee, stretching out his hand to have gathered thee, and to have converted thee, and to have brought thee home, but thou wouldst not! Jefus Christ offered me a plaister of his own heart blood to heal me, but I trampled it under-foot; the Spirit of God was knocking at the door of my heart, fometimes by the Hammer of the Law, and fometimes by the Hammer of the Gospel; the Spirit of God was hindering me from fin, and was stirring up holy motions in my heart, and those I quenched; the Ministers of the Gospel they prest hard upon me to yield to those warnings, frequent warnings that were tendred to me: but the Ministers I despised; and I mockt the Messengers of God, which he fent to me to warn me not to come into this place of torment: O the horrible, hellish, hideous cryes, the fearful and doleful screetches, roarings and yellings, that these considerations

will fetch from thee, when thou shalt consider that thou hast not obeyed the Gospel, thou hast not known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace; but thou hast wilfully lost such a Crown, fuch a Kingdom, fuch happiness, as will be matter of heart-tormenting forrow and mourning to all eternity; if the loss of the Ark, which was but a type of Gods presence, 1 Sam. 4. 18, 19, 20, was fo terrible to that good old man Eli, that he fell down and brake his neck, when he heard of the loss of it; and to that good woman, Phinehas, in her Travel, when the Ark was loft, that she cryed out, The glory is departed from Ifrael! O what then think you will be the loss of Gods presence, the loss of his Favour, the loss of eternal Happiness, the loss of this Crown and Kingdom which I have been speaking of! Oh, how will this make fuch damned wretches cry out in extream bitterness, The Glory, the Kingdom, the happiness: the Glory, the everlafting Glory is departed from me, and I must never see the face of God any more! This is the first Exhortation; Foresee this evil, and tremble at it.

My fecond Exhortation is this: Do not only foresee this danger, but study with the utmost endeavours of your souls to prevent it: Prevent it, you will say, How must I do that? I will tell you that, if God will but give you hearts to follow my counsel.

First, Be sure to avoid those sins that clog, and hamper, and setter thee as it were in the way to Heaven; so that thou canst not with any patience run the Race that is set before thee; such as these: Pride, Presumption, Unbelief, Apostacy, Earthlines, Selsishnes, Security and Sensuality: O these

are the fins that fetter thee, and hamper thee, away with them therefore.

Secondly, Pluck up thy feet, and resolve to run the ways of Gods Commandments: pray with David, that God would enlarge your hearts that you may run in the way of his Commandments, Psal. 119.

32. He doth not beg that the way may be made large, but that his heart may be enlarged: I will walk in the way of thy Commandments, though it be never so narrow, though there be never so many crosses in it, or thorns, or difficulties, or discouragements: if thou wilt but enlarge my heart, I will

run in the ways of thy Commandments.

Thirdly, Take heed of delays and procrastination, of putting it off from day to day, by saying, there will be time enough hereafter; it will be time enough for me to look after Heaven, when I have got enough of the World; If I do it the last year of my life, in the last month of the last year, in the last week of the last month, it will serve; O take heed of delays, this putting off of Repentance hath ruined thousands of Souls; shun that Pit whereinto many have fallen: shun that Rock upon which many have suffered ship-wrack; say with David, I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments, Psal. 1 19. 60.

Fourthly, Look upon the Crown of Glory set before thee; have the Goal in thy Eye, just as Moses had: he endured the frowns of Pharoah on the one hand, and he scorned the flatteries and Riches of Egypt on the other hand: Why? because he had an Eye to the recompence of Reward; O look upon the Crown and white Robe, and let this

quicken you.

Fifthly, Be fure thou hold out unto the end:

Now to press this Exhortation upon you, take

thefe Motives:

First, If you have but willing minds, it is accepted of God, so saith the Apostle; for if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not, 2 Cor. 8. 12. If thou usest the utmost endeavour of thy Soul, the Lord will help thee; if thou faint, he will support thee; if thou overcome, he will Crown thee.

Secondly, Consider, that among runners in a Race here on Earth, there is but one that will get the Goal; I, but here in the Race of Christianity, if thou do but so run, thou may k obtain: If thou do not sit down, if thou art not weary of well-doing; If thou by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and immortality, there is eternal life for thee, thou shalt have a Crown of glory; Nay, there are ten thousand, thousand Crowns in Heaven. The Lord Christ will give every one a Crown, that holds out to the end, 2 Tim. 4. 8, Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judg shall give me at that day.

But, why doth he call it a Crown of Righte-

onsness?

Answer, It is called a Crown of Righteonsness, because it is a Crown purchased by the blood of Christ, and a Crown that is promised. Now saith the Apostle, This righteous Crown, or this Crown of Righteousness, is laid up for me, and not only for me; there is not only one Crown and one Kingdom for me, but it is laid up for all those that love the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. O this glorious Master! He makes every one of his Servants to be crowned Kings: He hath made us

Kings unto God, Rev. 1. 6.

Thirdly, Confider the time of running is but short, but the time of your Reward will be eternal; if you do not come short of this eternal Rest, but hold out, and run to the end of the Race: If you can but fay with the Apostle, 2 Tim. 4. 7, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have been faithful unto the death; I have not wickedly departed from my God, as David speaks, Pfal. 18. 21. If you be not Apostates, but hold out to the end, know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. O the unconceivable Reward! O the invaluable and unconceiveable Blifs of all those that come to this eternal Rest! The tongue of Men and Angels is not able to express it. I beseech you on the one side, fear the loss of it: and on the other fide, let the consideration of that eternal happiness, quicken you to do the utmost of your endeavours to attain it; If you had ten thousand lives to spend in the service of God: if you had ten thousand Estates to lay down at his feet; if you could do as much as all the Apostles did, and all the Martyrs did or fuffered; let me tell you, the fruition of Jesus Christ one day in glery, N 4

184 Fear of missing Salvation, &c.

glory, will recompence it all. The Lord work these things upon our hearts, that every one of us here present may sear exceedingly and continually; lest a Promise being lest of entring into his Rest, we should forsake the Promise, and by forsa ing the Promise, should come short of eternal Happiness.

The

The persevering Saint, shall be the Crowned Saint.

REV. III. 11.

Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy Crown.

HE seven samous Churches of Asia, mentioned in the three sirst Chapters of this Book of Revelations, had this honour put upon them, to have seven Epistles sent unto them immediately from the

Lord Jesus Christ himself; and as they were the glory of the World, while they stood fast to God and to his Truth, so were they after their declining from God and his Truth, made the Monuments of his anger and indignation. The words I have now read unto you, are part of the sixth Epistle, written from the Lord Jesus Christ to the Church of Philadelphia; wherein, as he was a faithful Witness, and one that knew their spiritual Estate better than they knew it themselves: therefore he sets down in his Epistle something by way

of Commendation, Confolation, Exhortation.

Some-

Something is fet down here by way of Commeridation, in ver. 8, I know thy works, behold, I have fet before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; By open door may be meant, either a free and full liberty and opportunity of spreading the Gofpel, as the Apostle uses that phrase, 1 Cor. 16. 0. For a great door and effectual is opened to me, and there are many adversaries; or else by open door may be meant a door of Hope, in reference to Eternity; that door of Heaven that fin had shut against us, is by the merit of Jesus Christ opened to us: Oh, bleffed are they that have this door opened to them by Jesus Christ, who is the Door, the Way, the Truth, and the Life; but fays he, Thou bast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and bast not denied my name. This is by way of Commendation; though she had but a little strength, yet because she improved it, and did not deny the name of Christ, was not an Apostate Church, this our Saviour puts upon her account of Commendation.

2. Here is something also by way of Consolation, in ver. 9. 10, Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not; (that is, I will discover their Hypocrisse, I will make them known to be what they are, and reveal to whom they do belong) I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee; that is, I will subdue thy Enemies under thy seet, and let them know that I have loved thee; and in ver. 10, Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the bour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth: Here is marvellous comfort; Jesus Christ never brings his Children into a Wilderness, but he goes with

with them: when they go through the fire, and through the water, he will be with them: I will keep

thee, and I will uphold thee, fays he.

Then in the third place, Here is something by way of Exhortation in the words of the Text: Behold, I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy Crown: In which words there are two things considerable:

1. A Duty pressed.
2. Motives expressed.

The Duty pressed, is Constancy and Perseverance, Hold fast that which thou hast. The Motives expressed are two: the one is drawn from the suddenness of Christs coming to Judgment, Behold I come quickly; the other is taken from the danger of losing their Crown set before them, That no man

take thy Crown.

1. For the Duty pressed, Hold fast that thou hast; keep it with might and main, use thy utmost endeavour to keep what thou hast: What was that this Church had which Christ exhorts to hold fast? It had both the profession and possession of true Religion: Now this true Religion confifted in two things, in purity of Doctrine, and in holiness of Life and Conversation; both these this Church had: The had purity of Doctrine, as I shewed you out of ver. 8, Thou hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my Name; thou hast kept my Word. Then for holiness of Conversation; she had not denied Christs Name in the midst of Persecution, Thou hast kept theword of my patience; Now fays our Saviour, that which thou hast, that true Religion thou profefeft, maintain and keep, & hold fast against all opposition, both in profession and practice; hold fast the truth thou haft embraced, and hold fast the grace

that thou hast received : So then the Doctrine I shall commend to you hence, is this:

Doct. That Christians must hold fast, both the Truth and the grace they have received, with

Constancy and Perseverance.

There are two branches in this Doctrine, which we might make two Propositions:

The first this,

That Christians must hold fast the truths they have received, with Constancy and Perseverance.

The fecond this:

That Christians must hold fast the grace they bave received, with Constancy and Perseverance.

I begin with the first, That Christians must hold fast the truths they have received, with Constancy and Perseverance. For the proof of this, consider that place, 2 Tim. 1. 13, Hold fast the form of Sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus; the word is iσοτύπωσις, that Model, or that Plat-form of Gofpel-Truths, those fundamental Truths which the Apostle had wrapt up in a bundle to be received and embraced; fo Tit. 1.9, Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by found Doctrine, both to exhort and convince gain fayers: holding fast the faithful word; as Adversafaries pluck one way, fo do you pluck another way, striving earnestly for the faith of the Gospel. So Heb. 10.23, Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised: Prov. 4. 13, Take fast hold of instruction, let her not go: keep her, for she is thy life. Prov. 23. 23, Buy the truth, and fell it not; buy it at any rate, fell it at no rate: thus you fee this Duty commanded; see it commended in one Example most

remarkable and imitable, because it was in the purest times, the Primitive-time of the Church, Alls 2.42, And they continued stedfassly in the Apostles dostrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

For the better explication of this Point, it may

be demanded.

1. How must Christians hold fast the truth they have received?

2. Why must Christians hold fast the truth they

have received?

1. How must Christians hold fast the truth they are received?

I answer: They must hold it fast these three ways:

In their Sheetions, Practice and Conversations.

1. They must hold fast the truth in their Memories, Heb. 2. 1, Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, less any time we should let them slip: We should learn of the blessed Virgin Mary, of whom it is said, That she kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart, Luke 2. 19. It is not the great getter, but the great saver that becomes the rich man; it is not the hearing, but the keeping of Truths that will make us spiritually Rich.

2. We must hold fast the truth in our Assections, we must cleave to the truth in love and liking; thus did David, Psal. 119.31, I have stuck unto thy testimonies, O Lord, put me not to shame; and in ver. 20, My soul breaketh for the longing that it

hath

bath unto thy Judgments at all times; O how love I thy Law! it is my meditation all the day, Ver. 97. and ver. 167 of the same Plalm: My foul hath kept thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly. On the contrary, when men have not a fincere love to the Truth, they lose both the Truth and their own Souls too, 2 Theff. 2. 10, 11, Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be faved; and for this cause God shall send them strong delusions that they should believe a lye, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. This is the case of many Papifts and Atheifts at this day: they are drawn away to believe lyes, lying miracles, lying doctrines; when God fees men careless and remiss in their love to the Truth, he fays to fuch careless wretches, Take him Jesuit, take him Satan; bind him and blind him, and lead him to destruction. Hence are all those frequent Exhortations which are fcattered up and down in the Scripture, to love Wifdom, Understanding and Instruction, Prov. 3. 3. My son, forget not my Law, but let thine heart keep my Commandments; let not mercy and truth for sake thee, bind them about thy neck, write them upon the table of thine heart. Prov. 4. 6, Forsake not wildom, and she shall preserve thee; love her, and she Shall keep thee. Prov. 7. 4, Say unto Wisdom then art my sister, and call Understanding thy kinswoman. What a man loves, that he will keep carefully: if he loves a Tewel he will be careful to preferve it; if he loves a Picture, he will be careful not to deface it; a man will part with that last, which he loves best.

3. Hold fast the Truth, not only in Memory and Affection, but likewise hold fast the truth in Practice

and Conversation; you should yield conscionable fubjection to every known Truth, without holding any one part of the Truth in unrighteousness: the more a man practifeth what he knows, the more he shall know what to practice, John 7. 17, If any man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self. True knowledg is the mother of Obedience, but obedience is thenurse of Knowledg: when a Scholar hath taken out one Lesson well, it is an encouragement to a Master to teach him another; certainly if we would practice more, we should know more: The secrets of the Lord are with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant, Pfal. 25. 14. Look as the Widows oyl by laying it out was encreased, so knowledg laid out in practice is put forth to advantage; therefore put forth every known truth into practice: This is the way to hold fast the Truth you have received.

The fecond Quary by way of Explication is this; But why must Christians hold fast the truth they have received, with Constancy and Perseverance?

The Reasons are these:

First, Because the Truth hath many Enemies to oppose it, corrupt it, gainsay it, malign it, deface it, and disgrace it; though Truth cannot be ashamed, yet it is many times blamed; Jesus Christ himself had not more Enemies upon Earth, than his Truth hath at this day; yea, our blessed Saviour had the more Enemies, because he did bear witness to the Truth: John 8.40, But now you seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God; this did not Abraham. That was the great quarrel they had against our Saviour, because he told them the truth. Now as Jesus Christ, the Way,

Way, the Truth, and the Life, was opposed, so will his Truth be opposed to the end of the World.

First, The Devil is a grand Enemy to the Truth; that Prince of darkness would not willingly have one Lamp of the Sanctuary unblown out: the most of his rage is against the faithful Ministers of the Gospel, who hold forth the word of Truth to Gods people.

Secondly, Ignorant, Unbelieving, Atheistical wretches, that count Preaching foolishness, that

will be ready to undervalue it.

Thirdly, Subtile and undermining Priests and Jesuits: those Frogs out of the bottomless pit,

they will endeavour to corrupt it.

Fourthly. Scandalous Protestants, which bring not forth fruit, these will cast an aspersion and scandal upon the Truth; therefore because of these Enemies, Christians should hold forth the truth they have received; That's the first Reason.

Secondly, The second reason is this: Truth is worth the holding fast, because we have many blef-

fed priviledges by it, as for Example:

1. The truth of the Gospel is our Cap of Maintenance; it is the Charter of our Priviledges, it is the evidence of our everlasting Inheritance: Thy Testimonies have I claimed for my heritage, saith David; And will you not keep your evidences for

a good Inheritance?

2. Here is another Priviledg: If you will keep the Truth, you may be fure the Truth will keep you; as we say of a Tradesman, If he will keep his Shop, his Shop will keep him. The truth will be your Shield and Buckler, it you keep it, to defend you against all gainsayers, Psal. 91.4, He shall cover her with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou

thou trust, his truth shall be thy Shield and Buckler; hold fast the Faith, and that will hold you up; the Apostle bids us in one place, to stand fast in the faith, Rom. 1: 20, and in another place, by faith we stand, 2 Cor. 1.24. From both those places together, you may gather thus much: when we stand in it, then we stand by it: when we stand fast in the Faith, then we shall be sure to be established by the Faith against all oppositions.

Thirdly, The holding fast the Truth, will yield and afford you the sweetest joy and comfort upon your Death-beds: What was that made Saint Paul rejoyce at death? 2 Tim. 4. 7, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; He had not let go his hold; this was the ground of his joy and hope, when he was ready to be offered,

and his departure was at hand.

Fourthly, The truth of the Gospel is a Testament sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ, where inso many precious, rich, and royal Legacies are bequeathed unto us, by the Testator our blessed Mediator, our dearest Friend, that hath redeemed us with his own precious blood. Now, shall we not look after the proving of the Will of this blessed

Testator? So much for the Explication.

Now for the Application of this Point; And the first Use is by way of Reproof; does not this Doctrine justly and sharply reprove the unconstancy and unsettledness of many Professors at this day? Doth it not meet them as the Angel did Balaam, with a drawn Sword of a sharp reproof? O that this Reproof might take hold on those that are concerned this day; you know we read that Passage this day, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? No, John Baptist

Parrill.

Baptist was not a Reed, but a Rock; But alas, look upon Professors at this day, and we have more Reeds than Rocks, we have more falling than fixed Stars: More Children that are carried about with every wind of Doctrine (Ephes. 4. 14.) than men fetled, rooted, and stablished in the present truth, that are constant in nothing but unconstancy: are there not some that can be content to part with Religion, and let Truth go, and Gospel-priviledges go, and all go, fo they may but enjoy their Trades and Professions, their places and preferments: (though I hope better things of many of you that hear me this day): will not the Lord, think you, sharply rebuke such in his anger? will he not speak to them in his hot displeasure? What, have I given you the Gospel, such precious Truths, and do you flight them! do you trample them under feet! do you prefer the puddles of Popery, before thefe wholfom streams and clear fountain of Truth? Well, if the Gospel be a burthen to you, I will ease you of your burthen; and how doleful would this be, if God should fay, the priviledges you are weary of, shall be taken from you, you shall be eased of them !

Ose 2. Therefore give me leave in the Name of Christ, and in the cause of the Gospel, to be seech you to hold fast that which you have received: hold fast the Truth against Errour, hold fast the truth of the Protestant Religion against Popery, and Popish Innovations and Superstitions: this I forewarn you of, the rather upon this account, because there are some among us which are well conceited of that cursed Religion, because they never have smarted under the Antichristian tyranny, as our foresathers have done: they have forgotten the blood

of our Martyrs that was shed in Queen Maries days : Nay, that blood that was spilt in Ireland but twenty one years ago; therefore that you may be fenced against the flatteries and infinuations of Popish Doctrine, take notice that Popish Religion is an Idolatrous Religion; they are guilty of as grofs Idolatry as ever was practifed among the Hea-

thens: for,

1. They worship the Saints with a religious worship, which is proper to God only; they pray to Saints departed, which is a dishonour to God the Father, and Jefus Christ the only Mediator between God and man: They pray to the Virgin Mary, and make her their Redeemer, by praying to her, faying, Save us, O Saviour s, and redeem us, and in the hour of death receive us. This is a great dishonour to the Lord Jefus Christ; What can be greater Idolatry than this, to attribute that to a creature, which is proper only to the Creator?

2. They fet up Images to be worshipped contrary to the second Commandment, which fays, Thou Shalt not make to thy self any graven image, nor bow down to it, nor worship it, &c. But they will object and say, They do not worship the Image, but God in the Image. I answer, Neither did the children of Israel worship the golden Calf, but they thought they worshipped God, in or under the Image of the golden Calf, Exod. 32. 4, yet it was gross Idolatry, as appears, I Cor. 10. 7, Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them; as it is written, the people fate down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

3. Their Idolatry exceeds the Idolatry of the Heathen, in that they worship a piece of Bread, or the bread Transubstantiated (as they call it) into

the body of Christ. Now, if the body of Christ be in Heaven, as we are fure it is, as appears by that of the Apostle, Acts 3. 21, Whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy Prophets since the worldbegan; The Apostle says, the heaven must receive him until the time of the restitution of all things, that is, until the day of Judgment : It Christs body be in Heaven, then certainly they worship not the body of Christ, but a piece of Bread; and what more abominable Idolatry than this? One of their own Religion, Costerus, confesfes, It is more tolerable to worship a Dog, or a Cat, or a Crocodile, than to worship a piece of Bread: This their Idolatry is a great stumblingblock both to the Tews and Heathens: Therefore Averroes, a great Philosopher, being asked why he would not be a Christian? because, says he, The Christians eat the God they wor ship; therefore, fays he, Let my Soul be among the Philosophers.

Again, As they are Idolaters in their worship, so they are erroneous in their Doctrines; witness their doctrine of Justification, denying the righteousness of Christ, and trusting to their own righteousness: witness their doctrine of Merits by Works, yea, their doing works of supererogation: witness their Popish pardons, and Purgatory-satisfaction, as if the satisfaction of Jesus Christ were imperfect: witness their robbing of Jesus Christ of all his Offices, both as King, Priest, and Prophet, as might easily be proved. In brief, the Popish Religion is a loose and licentious Religion, a Sintolerating Religion; for the Pope can dispence with murthering of Princes, and the like, if it will promote his interest; forbidding Priests marriage,

and

and yet fuffering at the same time Stews and Brothel-houses. It was a faying of Sir Walter Raleigh, Were I to chuse a Religion for liberty and with dness, I would chuse the Popish Religion; therefore in Gods fear, hold fast the truth against Popery: And hold it fast likewise against the errour of Arminianism, which advances mans free-Will above Gods free-Grace: And hold fast the Truth against Socinians, that deny the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. In brief, be rooted, setled and established in the prefent truth; stick close unto the Word of God, as David did: stand for it, plead for it; chuse to lose Liberty, Estates, Comforts, Life and all, rather than to part with the Truth. David made the Truth his Inheritance: Now as Naboth faid to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I (hould give the Inheritance of my Fathers unto thee, 1 Kings 21. 3. Could he fay to of a temporal Inheritance, and shall not we fay fo of a spiritual Inheritance, which is transmitted to us by the blood of Martyrs? Shall the Ministers of the Gospel have cause to complain, as in Fer. 9. 3, And they bend their tongue like their bow for lyes: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth? Shall we deal with the truth as the Priest and Levite did with the man that went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among Thieves, left him wounded, and half dead, nay, dying in the streets? Hath God said, Buy the truth, and sell it not, Prov 23, and shall we sell it for our lusts and profits? God forbid. Consider who it was that abode not in the truth: it was Satan, a Lyar, who hath no truth in him, John 8.44. Even so all wicked menare faid to be destitute of the truth, and to hold the truth in unrighteousness, Rom. 1. 18: that is, they strive against the light of truth

truth in their hearts: those common principles of truth which they had in their understandings, they suppressed and choaked, that so they might sin more freely; but God forbid that we should do so. Will not this make the Spirit of truth to forfake us. when we forfake the truth? What an heroical refolution was that in holy Paul, 2 Cor. 13.8, For me can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth? Oh what an honour is it to a Christian, when truth hath fuch foveraignty in his heart, that it is dearer to him than his own life! Tit. 1. 9, Holding faft the faithful Word: Hold forth the word of Life, and hold fast the word of Truth: hold forth the word of Life by a true profession and conversation, and hold fast the word of truth by courage, constancy and resolution.

1. But may be you will ask me, What means may

we use thus to hold fast the truth?

I answer briefly:

1. Embrace the truth, not only in the light of it, but in the love of it; what you love, you will be fure not to part with: Oh, get your hearts fired with love to the truths of the Gospel, that you may say, Lord, I love thy truth exceedingly!

Love not the truth for the person's sake, but love the person for the truths sake; love no mans parts or person to admire him, and be a follower of him sarther than he follows Christ, Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ, I Cor. I I. I, saith the Apostle. It was a great fault in Barnabas, Gal. 2. I 3, that he was carried away by Peters dissimulation; by his admiring Peters person so much; by his resting and relying too much upon Peter, he fell into Peters errour.

3. Be ever jealous of your own strength, and trust

not too much to your own ability; this will provoke God to leave you to your felves, and then you will fall fearfully, 2 Cor. 12. 10, For when I am weak, then am I strong; when I am weakest in my felt, then am I strongest in a Saviour; but when I am strongest in my felf, in my own opinion, then am I weakest in a Saviour; no man stands by his own strength, for by humane strength can none prevail.

e

4. And laftly, Get your hearts established with grace, Heb. 13.9, It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; be ballasted with grace, as the word Becausau signifies: A Ship that is well balasted, is not so ready and apt to reel, as one that is not; and when the Apostle puts in a caveat against unsetledness and falling from grace, what means does he prescribe? 2 Pet. 3. 17, 18, Te therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the errour of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness; but grow in grace, and in the knowledg of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, fays he: O that you and I could grow more in grace; O that we could grow more in the practical part of Religion, in our hearts and houses, in our lives and conversations: I befeech you therefore, hearken to this first Exhortation and Duty here prest upon you, namely, to hold fast the truth you have received: hold it fast in your memories, in your affections, and in your conversations: so much for the first branch of the do-Arine, That Christians must hold fast the truth they have received, with constancy and perseverance.

I come now to the fecond Proposition, or fecond

branch of the Doctrine, that is this,

Christians must hold fast that Grace that they have received, with constancy and perseverance.

For the proof of this, the Scripture is abundantly plain and pregnant : in Pfal. 119.23, Teach me the way of thy Statutes, O Lord, and I will keep it to the end. Matth. 24. 13, He that endures to the end, he shall be saved; it is not setting our feet in the way of Christianity, but it is a continuance in that course that will bring you to the end of your hopes, the falvation of your fouls: So in Heb. 3. 14, We are made partakers of Christ (faith the Apostle) if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end: this will be an evidence that we are partakers of Christindeed, if we persevere and continue in the grace we have received, to the end of our days: so we are commanded to serve the Lord, not some few days, but all the days of our lives: Luke 1.75, He that puts his hand to the Plow, and looks back (faith our Saviour) is not fit for the kingdom of God, Luke o. ult. and in John 8. 31, If you continue in my words, then are you my disciples indeed; without this perseverance, we are but nominal, not real Disciples. But if you ask me, Why must Christians continue in grace, and hold fast the grace they have received? Hear but some Scripture Arguments, strongly pleading for this truth.

First, Unless Christians hold fast the grace and holiness they have received, they lose all they have, and all they hope for: All they have, viz. Their present endeavours; and all they hope for, their su-

ture Reward.

1. They lose all they have: all their praying, reading, hearing, and communicating, and humbling themselves before God; all this will be lost if they do not persevere; does not God himself say

0?

fo; Ezek. 18.24, When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, (he does not speak there of one truly and really righteous in a state of grace, one that is savingly righteous) when he turns away from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? all the righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. So that a man loseth all he hath done in the business of Religion. Saith Hierom, We must be judged, not by our past, but by our present condition. As the Tree falls, so it lyes: as death leaves us, so shall judgment find us.

2. He loseth all he hopes for too, for the Crown is promised to none but to those that do hold out: Be thou faithful to the death, and thou shalt receive a Crown of life, Rev. 2. 10. Christianity is compared to a Race: Let us run the race that is set before us, Heb. 12. 1. Now as in a Race, it is not enough for a man to begin well, but he must hold out, else he loseth the Gole; so is it in the Race of Christianity; therefore saith the Apostle, so run that you may obtain; not only run, but so run, that you may not lose the Gole, 1 Cor. 9.24.

2. Such as Christs love is to us, such must our love to Christ be. Christs love to us is a constant and unchangeable love: whom he loves, he loves to the end, John 13. 1. The Lord Christ is not only the beginner, but the sinisher of our faith, Heb. 12. 2. He did not leave the work of our Redemption impersect, but he held out until he came to consummatum est, till he cryed out upon the Cross, it is sinished.

Reason Third, may be this: Christians must

hold fast the grace they have received, because A-postatizing and turning our backs upon God is a most dangerous, damnable, soul-destroying sin.

1. It is dangerous in the Original of it: it

fprings from four bitter roots.

1. It springs from Infidelity, or Unbelief: take beed, faith the Apostle, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, Heb. 3. 12. Unbelief is a damnable sin, where it is not bemoaned, bewailed, and striven against; but reigning unbelief is a damnable fin; so faith our Saviour, Mark 16. ult. He that believes not, shall be damned: And he that believes not, the wrath of God abides upon him for ever, John 3. ult. this Infidelity makes the foul depart from God, and it makes God depart from the foul; It was a great observation of an eminent Divine, now with God; Look as the first return of the soul to God is by Faith, (for Faith fets the Soul in joint, it brings Christ and the Soul together) so the first departing of the Soul from God is by unbelief; for from thence comes a departing to other fins; and this departing to other fins, encreafeth our unbelief; and unbelief being encreased, the rent or breach between God and the Soul is made wider and wider, till at last the Soul comes to a total departing from God, and then God totally departs from the Soul; and fays, Depart from me thou curfed wretch, I know thee not. Now this fame Apostacy it springs from Unbelief.

2. This Apostacy springs from Hypocrisie; for usually Hypocrisie ends in Apostacy, as I have told you often: Judas the Hypocrite, proved Judas the Apostate; Amaziah did that that was right in the eyes of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart,

2 Chr.

2 Chr. 25. 2. therefore Amaziah the Hypocrite, proved Amaziah the Apostate. In Psal. 78. 37, it is said there, Their hearts were not upright, neither remained they stedfast in his Covenant. Why were they not stedfast? why did not they keep constant to the ways of God, to the Vows and Covenants made with God? their hearts were not upright; where grace is sincere, it will be lasting; but that which is counterfeit will be lost; whatever is coun-

terfeit, is fading.

3. It springs from Pride and Presumption: when men think they have grace enough, and holiness enough, and have gone far enough in the way to Heaven, this is the root of Apostacy; there is a gradual as well as a total Apoltacy; the Saints and Servants of God may be guilty of gradual A. postacy; so Peter was, though not of total Apoflacy; it was Peters prefumption that was one principal cause of his fall; lofty Cedars are thrown down with a Tempest, when the lower Trees in the Valley stand firm and fast: So likewise lofty Christians, high in their own conceits, many times nestle themselves on high, and their fall is great: whereas Christians that walk humbly are supported and preserved. Look as a man that gazeth at the Stars, looks up on high, quickly catches a fall, because he looks not to his feet: So a man that is highly conceited in his own opinion, lifts up his head on high, many times catches a feaful fall; it is just with God to leave such men to try them. Hezekiah, though a very gracious King, yet when his heart was lifted up with Pride, 2 Chron. 32.25, the Text faith, God left bim to himself, to try what. was in his heart, in ver. 31. That Solomon speaks of falling into misery, is as true of falling and declining

clining in grace, Prov. 16. 18, Pride goes before de-

firuction, and a haughty Spirit before a fall.

4. Apostacy springs from Covetousness and worldliness; look as the seed in the thorny ground, it brought nothing to perfection, because it was choaked with the cares, riches and pleasures of this world, as you may read in the Parable of the Sower, Luke 8. 14. So it is here, where the heart is stuft with covetousness, and the cares of this life, that is usually a forerunner of a fearful fall; Deman hath for saken me, having embraced this present world; what was the ground of his Apostacy, but his worldliness and selfishness? so that Apostacy is dangerous in the Original of it.

Secondly, It is damnable in the effects of it; for,

1. This puts Jesus Christ to open shame; in Heb. 6. 6. Apostates crucifie Christ asresh, and put him to open shame; for by falling away from him, we do as much as tell the world, we have found his service that it was an unprofitable service; the service of the world is better than his service, and that we have not found in Christ what we expected: when we turn our backs on Christ and go to the world, we do as much as openly proclaim, the world is a better Master than Christ is. When Soldiers for sake their General, it is a dishonour to him.

2. Then it is danmable in the effects of it, because it puts Religion to open shame: it makes the Name of God to be blasphemed, Rom. 2. 24. It is a scandal to the weak: it staves men off from the prosession of Religion, and it opens the mouth of Adversaries to speak evil of the ways of God; thus it is damnable in the effects.

Thirdly, It is destructive in the end and iffue of it: for, First,

First, God will reckon Apostates amongst Reprobates; God will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity, those that turn aside to their crooked ways, Pfal. 125. ult. Lead them forth, that is, put them in the same condition with the most profligate and scandalous sinner that is.

2. Their latter end shall be worse than their beginning, as our Saviour shews in the Parable, Mat. 12. 43, When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, and returns again, he brings seven Devils more, and the end of that man is worse than his beginning: The Apostle tells us, in 2 Pet. 2, and the two last Verses, It had been better men had never known the way of holiness, than having known it, to turn aside from the holy commandment: it saves with them according to the Proverb, the Dog is turned to his vomit again, and the Sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.

Before I come to make Application of this truth,

there is one doubt to be refolved.

You fay, Christians must hold fast the grace they have received: Why, may some say, Can a man that hath received saving grace, lose that grace he hath received?

To this I answer, No: He cannot lose saving-grace totally or finally; this is Mary's part, which cannot be taken away: Mary hath chose that good part which cannot be taken away, Luke 10.42, The Apostle saith, he that is born of God, sins not, cannot sin to death, because the seed of God, as a principle of spiritual life, abideth in him, I John 3.9. therefore he cannot sin unto death; the righteous are said to be built on an everlasting foundation, Prov. 10.25: that is, he abides unmovable in grace, till grace be turned into glory: and the reason of this

this is, saving-grace bestowed upon the Elect, is built on four immutable and unmovable Pillars.

1. The love that God bares to his people, it is an everlasting love, fer. 31. 3, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; we are very fickle and unconstant in our love to God: but God is not fickle

or unconstant in his love to us.

- 2. The Covenant of grace is a ftedfast Covenant, so faith David in the last words of that sweet Singer of Israel, when he was to leave the world, He hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, sure and stedfast, and ordered in all things, 2 Sam. 23.5. It is a Covenant sealed with the blood of Christ, therefore it is called the blood of the everlasting Covenant, Heb. 13.20, this everlafting Covenant cannot be broken: True indeed, fin may break the peace of the Covenant, but it cannot break the bond of the Covenant of Grace; it may break the peace of the Covenant, Psal. 89. 313 If thy children break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with a red, and their iniquities with stripes: but I will not suffer my faithfulness to fail, my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my mouth.
- 3. The third Pillar is this, the Power of God, which is irrelifible and unconquerable: on this Pillar our bleffed Saviour builds the salvation of his Elect, John 10. 29, My father that gave me these sheep, is greater than all, and none can take them out of my fathers hand: and on this Pillar St. Paul built his hope of Salvation; He is able to keep that I have committed to him: he is able to keep my depositum, 2 Tim. 1. 12.

4. The fourth Pillar is the Intercession of Christ:

and his intercession is a prevailing intercession, Heb. 7. 25, Wherefore he is able to Save to the uttermost those that come to God by him; seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them. Whence was it that Peter, though he fell fearfully, yet he did not fall finally? because our Saviour prayed for Peter, I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, Luke : 2.31. But mark, though this be true, That faving grace once wrought in the heart cannot be loft, for it is built on these four immutable Pillars: the Love of God, the Covenant of Grace, the Power of God, and the intercession of Christ; yet it is possible for a man in the state of grace to have his declinings (as I shewed you not long ago), he may have his declinings in regard of the measure of grace, and the comfortable feeling of grace, and in the operations and vigour of his grace.

First, A child of God may lose the former heat and fervency that he had. The Church of Ephesus

fell from her first love.

Secondly, He may lose the comfortable feeling of Grace: David prays, Restore to me the joy of thy

salvation.

3. Grace may be as a spark of fire covered over with a heap of ashes, that yields neither light nor heat, and so he may lose the vigour of his grace; therefore Christians should take heed of these declinings, and should hold fast the grace they have received.

Now to make fome Application.

1. By way of Reproof: How justly taxable and reprovable are they that do not hold tast the grace they have received, but fall from their first love? Oh, how many back-sliders are there, many that did begin well, but they are weary of well-doing!

doing! the Lord awaken them out of their drowfiness; know you not it will be bitterness in the latter end? will you lose all you have, and all you hope for? God forbid.

Therefore to close up this Point with a word of

Exhortation:

I beseech and exhort you, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, That you will hold fast the grace you have received, the savour of Religion that you have got, the principles of Religion, and the practice of a holy Conversation; hold fast these. Take heed of Apostacy, as you love your God, as you love your Souls, as you tender your own everlasting Salvation; be not found in the number of those that draw back to perdition: but be stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, I Cor. 15 .ult. That you may persevere and not be weary, Let me give you these three or four helps.

1. Be not content with a notional and traditional Faith; for such a Faith will change as the time changes; but labour for a divine, well-grounded, lively, working, effectual Faith, experimental Faith, such as the Samaritans had: Now do we believe, say they, not because thou toldst us this is the Christ, but because we have heard him our selves, and we know indeed this is the Christ the Saviour of the

world.

2. Be much in Duty; if you would not be weary of well-doing, be much in well-doing; It is a Paradox in other things, to fay, He that would not be weary of running, let him run the more; and if you would be weary of working, work the more: I, but here in Divinity it is a truth; the more

more you are doing, the better you will be able to do: be acting grace, and in the acting of it, your grace will be encreased: grace acted, intends the habit; and the habit intended, does encrease strength; therefore up and be doing, and God

shall be with you.

3. Wale in the spirit, and then you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh: if the Spirit of God help you, you shall run and not be weary; walk, and not faint, sta. 40. ult. Remember what I have told you, It is not the strength of habitual grace, but it is the auxiliary, the affisting-grace of the Spirit that carries you through every duty: Though you do duty, yet the Spirit of Christ is the moving and working-cause; for without him you can do no-

thing.

4. Set before you the example of the Saints, that is another help to perseverance: it is said of Moses, he held out, though he met with temptations on the right hand and on the left, he held out; why? because he saw him that was invisible, Heb. 11.27. So fob, Job 23.11, My feet hath held his path, his way have I kept, and not declined: So David, I was almost consumed on earth, by trouble and persecution that he met with, yet have I not forgotten thy Law, Pial. 119. 87. So Daniel, when he knew the Writing was fealed, and his Religion would cost him not only his liberty, but his life; Dar niel was Daniel still, he went on his course as he was wont to do, Dan. 6. 10. The bleffed Martyrs that went through imprisonment, bonds, reproaches, perfecution, yet with what courage did they press towards the Mark? and to with courage they held out to the end, and in the end.

5. Be often meditating on the rich and royal
Reward.

Reward, those rich and glorious hopes laid up for those that persevere; this, if any thing will bear up your hearts and hopes when they are ready to faint: What made the Apostle hold out in the midst of all temptations? 2 Cor. 4. 16, For this cause we faint not; Why? because, says he, our light afflictions which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; Ver. 17. Moses he held out, chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Why? he had an eye

to the recompence of reward, Heb. 11.26.

A Traveller after a long journey, when he is weary and faint, and fits down, if he fee the Town before him, it puts life into him, and he plucks up his feet, and refolves not to be weary till he be at his journeys end. O look at the Crown and white Robe set before you, and faint if you can : get on the top of Mount Nebo, look on the Land of Promile, those good things set before you: taste the grapes of Canaan before you come to Canaan. Consider two things: from what you are delivered, and to what you are appointed: You are delivered from wrath, and appointed to mercy; delivered from Hell, and appointed to Heaven; delivered from a hopeless condition, to a most hopeful and happy condition, that the heart can conceive or tongue express. If these things were foundly digested, and seriously considered, they would awaken your drooping drowfie fpirits, and fet the wheels a going, and make us redouble our endeavour, and encrease our diligence, that the Kingdom of Heaven might even fuffer violence; yea, these things will constrain us in the midst of all afflictions, temptations, and tryals, to prefs towards

wards the Mark: therefore awake thou that sleepest; the Apostle speaks of a sleep of drowsinels, Rom. 13. 11, For, says the Apostle, your salvation is mearer than when you believed. A stone, the nearer it comes to the Center, the swifter the motion will be: Redeem and recover lost time by double diligence: set on Heaven by a new resolution; set thy face towards Sion, as one that looks on all these creature comforts as vanishing into smooth, and as one that resolves to have Heaven or nothing: do much, and suffer much, thou wilt never repent; Be stedfast and unmovable, abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as your labour shall not be invain in the Lord.

To fet home this Exhortation of holding fast what you have received, there are two Motives in the Text which I will dispatch with a quick hand.

First, Behold, I come quickly; What coming does our Saviour here speak of? I Answer, This coming of our Saviour may be understood three ways: He comes either in a way of Tryal, or in a way of Mercy, or in a way of Judicature. He comes in a way of Tryal, fo he foretels the heavy temptations and perfecutions that came upon his Church in the time of Trajanus the Emperor, as Mr. Brightman well observes: This lasted fourteen years, yet our Saviour calls it but an hour of temptation, in ver: 10. Likewife Strabo the Geographer, writes, That the Church of Philadelphia was often Maken with Earth-quakes, both the and other Cities were shaken with Political Earthquakes, as well as Natural: with Adversaries that lought their ruine. Hence you may take this Obfervation, .8

That

That God hath fore and shaking Tryals to exercise his Church withal.

Through many Afflictions we must enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; And they that will live godly in Christ Fesus, must suffer persecution, In one kind or other, in one measure or other. God fees shaking is needful to awaken us; to shake us out of our fecurity, and to purifie, and reform, and refine us: therefore let us not fettle upon our Lees, and promile our felves fecurity from Tryals. The hand of God hath been heavy upon the Protestant Churches in Piedmont, in Poland; Oh, the dreadful things that they have fuffered! Why should we expect exemption? are we better than they? Be forewarned, that you may be fore armed: lay in provision against the day of Tryal: lay in a stock of Faith, and Patience, and Self-denial, &c. I Gird on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to

Li may be understood in a way of mercy; I come quickly in a way of mercy? I come to moderate the tryals, and to deliver thee from temptations. God will not fuffer the Rod of the wicked to he on the back of his righteous servants, Pfal. 125.3. So then the Dorrine is this right.

Doet of the troubles and tryals of Gods Church and Chofen, though they may be flump, yet they

Heome quickly, Reome to deliver my Church quickly Nero's Tribulation was but for ten days, Rev. 2.10, For a final moment have I for Jakenubee, but with great mereles will I gather thee; in a bitle wrath I hid my face from their for a moment, but everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee;

e Lord thy redeemer, Ifa. 54. 7,8.

Application.

Therefore it ferves exceedingly for the encouragement of the godly, our afflictions are but for a moment: do but fet against your present Affliction, the glory that it brings after, and against light afflictions, a weight of glory; and against momentary affliction eternal glory; and what comparison is there between them? none at all: but,

Judicature; I come to call men to account, to return to every man according to their works: therefore fee that you hold fast what you have received, and continue constant to the end, and you shall be sure to receive a rich and Royal Reward. Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every one according as his works shall be, Rev. 22. 12. Heb. 10. 37, Tet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry: Be patient therefore, brethren, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draws nigh, Jam. 5. 8.

But here it may be objected, Our Saviour spake this above sixteen hundred years ago, The coming of the Lord draws migh, And yet he is not come to Judgmen. To this I Answer, A thousand years in Gods account, is but as one day: we count moments long, because we are but poor short spirited creatures; But God that is of an eternal duration, he counts a thousand years but a very small moment; all that space of time should be small to them that know the greatness of Eternity; Do but think of Eternity, and alas; a thousand of years are but as a moment. But observe here, when our Saviour speaks of coming to Judgment, he fixeth a Behold before it: Behold I come quickly; it teacheth us this Doctrine,

Doct. Christs coming to judgment is a matter of infinite concernment, and requires our most seri-

ous consideration.

Behold, Consider what I say, I am coming to judgment; There will therefore be a day of Judgment, that is certain: this is called the great day in ver. 6, of the Epiftle of Saint Jude, and in 2 Tim. 4. 8, That day, nal' exoxin, by way of eminency; and it is called a day of Judgment, because then every one shall receive a final sentence, either of absolution or condemnation: But why is this a matter of fo great concernment? I answer, because Eternity depends upon it: it will be a final determination to every foul, to an everlasting and unchangeable condition of endless bliss or wo; O this Eternity! it fwallows up all our thoughts: if it were feriously considered, it were enough to make the most prophane and profligate finner to turn the strictest Saint that ever trod upon earth: Therefore to make fome Use of this.

Live in a continual expectation of Christs coming. But fome will fay, This day of Judgment cannot be so sudden, for the Jews are not yet called, and Antichrist is not yet come down. I answer, and O that this Answer might fink into your hearts: Though the world fhould continue a thoufand years, yet there is a particular Judgment as well as a general: every mans deaths-day, is every mans dooms-day: It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment. As foon as the Soul departs out of the body, then it is judged: the Soul is judged then, either to Heaven or Hell; therefore thy day of death will be the Judgmentday to thee, when ever it falls, though it falls this week before the next. Oh that you and I could be affected

affected as Jerom was, Whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, methinks I hear the Trumpet found in my ears, Arife ye dead and come to Judgment. Therefore let your whole lives be a continual Preparation for that great day; get those graces that may present you without spot or blot before Gods Tribunal. Get,

1. The precious grace of Faith, for that puts on the Royal Robe of Christs righteousness; and in

that Robe you will stand undaunted.

2. Get Repentance from dead works, be purifying your selves more and more, as he is pure; Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the day of refreshing shall come, Act. 3. 10.

3 Get a Christian and constant care and diligence in your general and particular callings: Bleffed is the man whom his Lord shall find so doing. This is the first Motive drawn from the suddenness of our Saviours coming: I come quickly. Another Motive (and of that a few words, and I have done) That no man take thy Crown. The danger of losing the Crown: But here it may be demanded, What is meant by Crown? I answer, Either the Crown of Gospel-Ministry, or else the Crown of eternal Life. First, God honoured this Church with a very glorious Ministry, fo that the very Adverfaries, the feeming Jews did worship, that is, did fubmit themselves to this Church, and acknowledg Her to be beloved of God; God honoured this Church with a very glorious Ministry. Then it may be meant of the Crown of life: as Mr Perkins well observes upon the Text, Rev. 2. 10, I will give thee a Crown of life.

But here it may be demanded, Can the Crown

of Life be loft? To this I Answer:

In the visible Church there are Hypocrites as well as sincere Christians: Now Hypocrites may lose the Crown, because they never had a title to it, they never had a title to the Crown of Glory; a man must have an interest in grace, before he can have a title to the Crown of glory: For others that have grace begun in their hearts, you must know such cautions as these are, are to quicken them: 2 John 8, Look well to your selves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward, Heb. 12. 15, Beware, lest any of you fall short of the grace of God: Or it may be such cautions are put in to let you see, that if you are lest to your selves, you would let go grace, and lose glory and all.

To shut up all, If a Gospel-Ministry be a Crown, Oh that you and I would learn to prize a Gospel-Ministry more than we have done: it may be God will teach you to know the worth of it by the want of it; hold it fast; remember, God can give the Gospel to another Nation, that may be will bring forth better fruit than we have done; and when the Gospel is gone, our glory is gone: then we may say, The Glory, the Glory is departed from Eng.

land; But then,

2. If there be a Crown of glory laid up for them that do hold out, then receive that Exhortation, a Text I opened in many Sermons, on Heb.
4. 1, Let us therefore fear lest a promise being lest us of entring into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it; Therefore take hold of God by Faith: Be much in prayer, be much in wrestling with God; be much in treasuring up grace against the day of glory, as wicked men treasure up wrath against

against the day of wrath. Study to be better acquainted, not only with the principles of Religion, but with the power of godlines. Get more Communion with Christ, and influence of grace from him, get more conformity to him; O mind this business of Eternity, of getting this Crown that is laid up for those that hold out and perfevere. I conclude this Text with that in Rom. 2. 7, To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, Eternal life.

Mercy

MERCY DESPISED,

AND

GOD PROVOKED

thereby.

PSAL. CVI. 24.

Yea, they despised the pleasant Land, and believed not his Word.

N the last Sermons which I gave you out of Heb. 4. 1, Let us therefore fear, lest a Promise being lest us of entring into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it; I shewed you, what a dreadful, invaluable, unconceivable and irrecoverable loss it was to come short of that eternal Rest that God hath prepared for the Saints in Light. In losing of Heaven you shall lose the presence of God, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore: In losing of Heaven, you shall lose the savour of God; never, never to enjoy a smile of his Face, never, to lie under the hope of one drop of mercy: In losing Heaven,

you shall lose fellowship and communion with God, that eternal happiness which is the portion of the Saints: such an invaluable loss, that Eternity it self will be little enough to deplore it and bewail it.

My Defign in the choice of this Text, is, to shew you from it, what one main cause is why men come short of that eternal happiness: namely, their despising and undervaluing those glorious hopes that are laid up in H aven: as the despising the Land of Canaan was the main reason why to many thousands of the Israelites were excluded from the Land of Canaan, as the Text here tells you: Yea, they despised the pleasant Land, they believed not his Word. Many were the provokingfins that the people of Israel stood guilty of, after that the Lord had wrought that glorious deliverance for them, in bringing them out of the Land of Egypt: as the Psalmist reckons up a whole Catalogue of them in this excellent Psalm wherein my Text lies: As,

First, Their Rebellion at the Red sea, in the 7 verse, Our Fathers understood not thy Wonders in Egypt, they remembred not the multitude of thy mercies: but provoked him at the Sea, even at the red Sea, where God had wrought that glorious deliverance for them; for you know they were ready to distrust the Power of God, and they murmured against Moses the Servant of God, Exod. 14. 11, And they said unto Moses, Because there were no Graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the Wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us

forth out of Egypt?

Secondly, Another fin was their murmuring for want of flesh, in the 14 ver. of this Pfalm, But luft-

ed exceedingly, or they lusted with a very great lust: Nothing but slesh forsooth, would serve their turn; they would not be contented with the provision that God made for them, of Manna, which was Angels Food, which was called Angels food, because that it so be the glorious Angels in Heaven should want bread for their entertainment and provision, if they stood in need of bread, they could not have better bread than that which God fed the Israelites with from Heaven, every day: but this would not content them, they murmured, and lusted exceedingly after slesh.

Thirdly, Another sin was their Sedition, and their Conspiracy against Moses and against Aaron, in the 16 verse, They envyed Moses also in the Camp, and Aaron the Saint of the Lord; You take too much upon you, you sons of Levi: why should you be more holy than we? are not all the Congregation holy? This was a horrible provocation, that made the Lord to cause the earth to open and

fwallow up Corah, Dathan and Abiram.

The fourth fin they were guilty of, was their despissing or undervaluing the pleasant Land that God gave them, in the words of the Text: Yea, they despised the Pleasant Land, they believed not his Word. So then, in the Text you may take notice of these two Particulars:

First, Israels horrible ingratitude, in this Phrase,

They despised the Pleasant Land.

Secondly, The ground of that Ingratitude, in these words, They believed not his Word: For the

first,

First, Ifracis horrible Ingratitude, They despised the Pleasant Land. By a pleasant Land here, is meant the Land of Canaan, that Land of Promise,

that

that God had promised to Abraham sour hundred and thirty years before ever they did enjoy it, and it is called in the Hebrew, a Land of Desires, or a desirable Land; as dainty sood is called Meat of Desires (Job 33.20.) in the Hebrew: So that his Life abhorreth bread, and his Soul dainty meat, or meat of Desires. This same dainty Land, this same desirable Land, this same pleasant Land, this Land of Promise, they despised, they rejected, they contemptuously scorned: so the Original word properly signifies. Now consider this Land of Canaan here, which they despised, in a two-sold Notion:

Firft, As it was an earthly Possession.

Secondly, As it was a Type, or Pledg, or Earnest-penny of that heavenly Inheritance laid up for the Saints in Light: And you shall see in both these respects, their despising this Land was hor-

rible Ingratitude.

First, Consider it in the first Notion: namely, as it was an earthly Possession, it was very great Ingratitude. But consider it in the second Notion: namely, as it was a Pledg and earnest-penny of the heavenly Inheritance, so it was a far greater Ingratitude. Take it in the first Notion, for an earthly Possession: so the Doctrine you may observe from thence, is this,

Doct. That despising or undervaluing of those outward blessings and favours that God bestows upon a people, is a God-provoking sin, a sin of

great Ingratitude.

This you see was the fin of Israel, after they came out of the Land of Egypt, to despise any Land that God should bestow upon them: but especially considering that they had been bond-

mer.

men in Egypt, that they that had undergone such a base tervitude, that they had undergone such burthens of Tyranny, for God to bring them out of such a condition, into a Land, this had been a great mercy; but to bring them into such a Land, a Land slowing with Milk and Honey, to bring them into a Land so desirable: This certainly was a grievous provocation, especially if you consider what Land this was; for,

First, It was very delightful in regard of the Scituation of it; Canaan being scituated (as Geographers observe) in the midst or Center of the whole Earth: for it had Asia upon the East, and Europe upon the West, and Africa upon the South, and America, and Scythia, and Persia upon the North; it was very pleasant therefore in the scituation of it.

Secondly, It was pleasant in regard of the Air; though it is true, it was a hotter Climate than ours is, yet it was a very temperate Climate; it was a Climate of that temper, that they were free from all noisome vapours: so it was a healthful Land in

that regard.

Thirdly, It was a very fruitful Land; a Land that did abound with Corn, and Cattel, and Vines, and Fig-trees, and Pomgranates, as you may find Deut. 8.7, 8,9, For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good Land; a Land of Brooks of waters of Fountains, and depths that spring out of valley, and hills: a Land of Wheat, and Barley, and Vines, and Fig-trees, and Pomgranates: a Land of Oyl, Olives and Honey; A Land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it: a Land whose stones are iron, and out of whose Hills thou mayst dig brass. It's a Land, saith the Lord, wherein thou shalt not lack any thing, any thing

thing that may be defirable, anything that may be comfortable for their subsistence : for them therefore to despise such a Land as this was, it could not but provoke the Lord to anger. You know there is no juster provocation among men, than kindness churlishly refused. Now for the Israelites to defpife this Land, a free gift, a gift of bounty and favour, fuch a gift as they could not in the leaft merit at the hand of God; you find God himfelf beating them off from that, Dent. 9.4, Speak not then in thine heart, after the Lord thy God hath cast them out before thee, saying, for my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possessthis Land. It was not for thy righteousness-lake, but it was for his own Name-fake, and his Promise-sake, that he made to Abraham for them to possess this Land; therefore it was a gift of favour, and free bounty, doubtless; and it was a very great fin, because ingratitude is hateful both to God and man. Unthankfulness (as one calls it) is the hellish bar or stop to all future mercies. A man that is about to pour in some precious Oyl or Liquor into a Glass, if he fee the Glass be crack'd, or there be a hole in it, you know he will pour in no Oyl or Liquor in that Glats: So here, an unthankful man is a broken Glafs, and God will not bestow his favours upon those that are unthankful, at least he will not beflow them in mercy; he fometimes gives these ourward bleffings in anger, I gave thee a King in mine anger, Hof. 13. 11, but he never gives mercies in love and favour to unthankful wretches. This fin of unthankfulness sometimes provokes the Lord to strain for his Rent, when men will not give him the quit-Rent of thankfulness. Therefore fays God, Hof. 2. 8, 9, Because she did not know that I gave

gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplyed ber silver and gold, which was prepared for Baal; therefore will I return and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the season thereof, and will recover my Wool and my Flax, given to cover her nakedness: fays God, I will strip her naked, and leave her bare. Unthankfulness provokes the Lord you fee, to take away all his mercies, and to strain for his Rent: but that is not all, for it provokes the Lord to inflict some spiritual judgment, when men are unthankful', Rom. 1, 21, and 24 verses, compared together : it's faid, Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thank ful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkned Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves. So that you fee, despising or undervaluing those outward blesfings or mercies that God bestows upon a People, is a God-provoking fin, a fin of ingratitude.

f

Let me briefly apply this; for this is not the Point I intend principally to handle; but only to

touch at it:

I beseech you my Brethren, Let every one of us enter into our own hearts, and by some serious, self-restecting thoughts, call our selves to an account, whether we be not in the number of those that despise and undervalue those National mercies wherewith God hath enrich'd us. We live in a pleasant Land, in a Goshen for light, in a Canaan for plenty: We live here in a City that is listed up to Heaven in Mercies, in the use of Ordinances: I believe there is not such a place, under the Heavens of God, not such a City that hath such plentiful

tiful provisions both for Soul and Body, as we haves But, have we walked worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleafing? Have we liv'd up to our light, under our means, under our mercies? Have we thankfully prized and improved these National priviledges and bleffings that we enjoy? No, no, God knows, and our own hearts know, that it is not fo. Alas, it may be faid of these Nations, as it was said of the Land of Canaan, Ezra y. 11, The Land to which ye go to possess it, it is an unclean Land, with the filthiness of the People of the Lands; with their abominations which have filled it, from one end to another with their uncleanness. So may it be faid of this pleafant Land; this goodly Land, this goodly City that we live in; it is an unclean City, through the filthiness and abomination of many that live therein: and therefore that which God threatens, Levis. 18. 24, And the Land it felf vomiteth out ber Inhabitants: even so justly might our God deal with us, because we have defiled the Land with our abominations and uncleanness; therefore the Land should spew us out. We have swallowed down his mercies without regarding him that bestowed those mercies upon us: just like the Hog under the Acorn-tree that swallows down the Mast, but does not look unto the Tree. We have been a murmuring and discontented people, to looking upon one crofs, as to forget a thousand mercies: We have no way walked worthy of all the good things that our God hath given us to enjoy: therefore it were just that God should deal with us as he threatens, Dent. 28. 47, 48, Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness; and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things: therefore shalt thou serve thine enemy which

the Lord shall send against thee in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck; until he have destroyed thee, &c. Our unthankfulness is intolerable, the Lord awaken us to repentance: but

I will not infift longer upon that Point.

I come therefore to the second Notion: Consider the Land of Canaan, as it was a Type, or Figure, or Pledg, or Earnest-penny of that same Heavenly Inheritance that God hath laid up for the Saints in Light; and so their ingratitude was far greater; they despised that pleasant Land, this was a grievous provocation indeed; so the Doctrine I shall give you from the words, considered in this notion or sense, is this:

DSA: That despising, or undervaluing that Heabenly Inheritance that God hath prepared for the Saints in light, is a very grievous Godprovoking sin: it is a fin of the first magnitude.

For the proof of this Point, that one place of Scriptue will be fufficient, Heb. 2. 2, 3, For if the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward: how shall we escape, if we neglet so great salvation: which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him? How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? By Salvation there, he means the Gospel, which is the cause of our Salvation: for it is observable, that both the Gospel of Grace, and Grace wrought by the Gospel, and Glory, which is the persection of Grace, they all come under one name. The Kingdom of God,

in Scripture; because those whom God by the Gofpel brings to Grace, he will by Grace bring to Glory; now, fays the Apostle, How shall we escape, if we neglect fo great salvation? It is a marvelous strong Negation: he does not say, We shall not escape, or hardly escape, if we neglect so great salvation; but, How shall we escape? It includes the strongest Negation that can be; as if he should fay, It is impossible for us to escape eternal Condemnation, if we do neglect so great Salvation; not only if we do despise this eternal Salvation, but if we neglect it. Salvation it felf will not fave that man that despises or neglects it.

But for the clearing of this Point, that you may a little better understand it: there are these three Queries I will endeavour to speak to, in opening

of the Doctrine.

First, When may a man be faid to despise or undervalue that Heavenly Inheritance that is prepared for the Saints in light.

Secondly, How comes it to pass, that men fo lightly regard, and undervalue that eternal Sal-

vation?

Thirdly, How may it appear that this despising or undervaluing of this Heavenly Inheritance, is fuch a God-provoking fin?

First, When may a man be faid to despise, or undervalue the Heavenly Inheritance that is prepa-

red for the Saints in light?

I shall answer this Query, and shew it you, in

thefe four Particulars:

First, Then doth a man despise and undervalue this Heavenly Inheritance, when he is an Earthlyminded man; when he does over-value earthly things, and under-value Heavenly things: when Q 2

he

he does fet his affections fo much on things below. that he cannot let his affections on things above: for these two are inconsistent, they cannot stand together, as appears by that in I John 2. 15, Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: As if he should fay, The love of God, and the love of the world, are inconsistent. So, in Col. 3. 2, Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the Earth: as if he had faid. If you set your affections on things below, you cannot let them on things above. Now when a man prefers a present possession, before a suture expectation: when he fays, Give me a Bird in hand, rather than two in the Bush: give me the pleasures and profits, and honours, and contentments of this life, let me have prefent pay: but as for that glorious Inheritance you speak of, for the time to come, let them look after it that will; as he faid, Let me have my part in Paris, let who will look after a part in Paradice. This is an undervaluing of this Heavenly Inheritance.

Secondly, Then may a man be said to despise and undervalue this Heavenly Inheritance, when he is sluggish and sloathful, and will not stir up himself to take hold of God: when he will not set about those means that God. hath appointed for the attaining of those glorious hopes that are laid up in Heeven. True, nothing is to be done by us in a way of merit; but much is to be done in the use of means for the attaining of this Eternal Happiness, (Ibil. 2.12,) Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: Mark, it is not said, Work out your salvations, Christ hath wrought out our salvation for us by way of merit, but we must work

out our falvation in the use of means : Origi narreya(Se, Work it out, as it were out of the fire. Now when a man will not be contented to take that pains that the Lord requires, in this working out of his falvation; when he fits still and is idle, or when he is floathful or negligent in Duty: when he does either neglect Duty, or fleepily and carelesly perform every Duty, this is a despifing and undervaluing this Salvation. For you must know, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a Race, 1 Cor. 9.24: and he that would win the Crown by first coming to the Goal, must run for it. It is compared to a Kingdom, Luke 13. 24, and he that would win it, must strive for it; Strive to enter in at the strait gate, Aywileds, Strive as in an Agony. And it's compared to a Crown, 1 Cor. 9. 25: and he that would obtain it, must fight for it; I have fought a good fight (faith the Apostle) I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteons Judg shall give me at that day, 2 Tim. 4.8. The Crown of Glory there, is called a Crown of Righteousnes; not because it was merited by Pauls righteousness, you must not understand it so; but it is called a Crown of Righteonsness, because it was promised, and because it was purchased; it was freely promised by the Father, and it was fully purchased by the precious blood of Jesus Christ: fays he, Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteausness, which the Lord the Righteous Judg shall give me at that day. But fays he, I have fought a good fight first, and I have finished my course. Now, when men will neither fo run as that they may obtain, nor fo strive as that they may gain a Kingdom.

dom, nor so fight that they may get a Crown that is laid up in Heaven for the Saints: then they may be said to despise and undervalue the Heavenly Inheritance. That is the second.

Thirdly, Then may a man be faid to despise this Heavenly Inheritance, when he is a felf-feeking Christian, or rather a pelting Chapman (as I may fo call him) that will not come up to the price of Salvation, that will not be contented to take the pains that must be taken; if io be he may be the master of his own defires; then he would be content to enjoy those glorious hopes. But when a man will not with the wife Merchant, fell all, that he may buy the Pearl; for as Jefus Christ may be called A Pearl of Price, so may this Heavenly Inheritance be called A Pearl; though not of that price that Jesus Christ is of, yet a Pearl of price too. Now when men will not part with all, in cafe it come to that point, to get this Pearl, they despife and undervalue this bleffed Inheritance. Every man would be contented to come to Heaven, fo he might come in his own way, on his own terms, and in his own time. If he may come to Heaven in his own way, that is Heaven and the World, Heaven and his lufts. Heaven and his own ends and interests together: Or if he may have Heaven upon his own terms: namely, to live as he lift, to take Jefus Christ as a Saviour, but not as a Prince; to take him as a Redeemer, but not as a Ruler: Or if he may have Heaven in his own time; namely, when he lies upon his Death-bed, when his fick Bed is ready to deliver him over to his cold Grave; but all his life long he would profecute his own ends, and interest, and live to himself more than to Jesus Christ; vevery man on Earth would be

contented to have Heaven on these terms But now, when it comes to this, that a man that will have this Heavenly Inheritance, must have it in Christs way, in a way of Holines: Be ye boty; for I am holy, I Pet. 1. 16. And without holiness none hall fee the Lord, Heb. 12, 14. And when it comes to this, that if a man will have Heaven, he must have it on Christs own terms: which is, that thou must be contented to serve me, as well as to be faved by me; and to be contented to be ruled by me, as well as to be redeemed by me; thou must be contented to bear my Cross, as well as to wear my Crown. And when it comes to this, that a man must have Heaven in Christs own time what time is that? To day if ye will bean his voice, harden not your bearts, Heb. 3. 7. Putnot off your repentance from day to day: fet about the work with all your might; fet about it without any further procraftination, or delay. Now here it flicks: rather than men will have Heaven on these terms, they resolve they will never have Heaven, they will let it go.

Fourthly, Then men may be accounted, or faid to despise Heaven, when Heaven is not accounted worthy those difficulties or discouragements that they must sustain in the pursuit of those glorious hopes. Thus with the Israelites, when the Spies came from Ganaan, and told them; True, the Land is an excellent Land; but let's tell you, there are Giants, Anakims, walled Towns, there will be a great deal of difficulty before you get possession; and if you will possess the Land, you use fight for it, it will cost you the lives of many of you, before you obtain it. Oh now, upon this report they were ready to stone Caleb and Joshua, those

4

two that told them, that they were able to conquer the Inhabitants: and that they were but as bread for them, and their frength was departed . they were ready (I fay) to stone them, when they heard of the difficulties of obtaining the Land of Canaen, and they would rather go back againinto Egypt, than fight for Canaan; we will rather go back to our Leeks, and Onions, and Garlick. than have this pleasant Land, if we must fight and adventure our lives for it. So here, when fainthearted cowardly Christians hear, that through much tribulations we must enter into the Kingdon of God, Acts 14. 22: Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution, 2 Tim. 3. 12. And when they hear that truth which our Saviour tells them, Mark 8 ,4, If you will be my Disciples, you must take up your Cross and follow me: As good Soldiers that follow their Captain, through dirt, and mire, and blood. And that they must be hated of all men for the fake of Jesus Christ, Matth. 10, 27, And that they must endure hardship in the World, Matth. 5. Though their forrow shall be turned into joy : Say they, If we cannot have Heaven but upon these terms, we will have none of it, we will rather have the pleasure of fin for a feafon we will lye, and lwear, and cozen, and cog, and flatter, and temporize, and fwim with every ftream, and lole the peace of our Consciences; we will rather chuse to seep in a whole skin, though with gauled Confeiences: before we will have Heaven upon such terms, we will have our ease; we cannot abide difficulties and difcouragements, which are in the way that leads to Heaven; this is a despiting of the pleasant Land. That is the first Query, When may a man be said

to despise this heavenly Inheritance. But in the fe-

cond place.

Secondly, For Explication. How comes it to país, that men are so ready to despise and to undervalue fuch a glorious Inheritance, an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away, referved in the heavens, 1 Pet. 1. 4. A Kingdom that cannot be shaken, Heb. 12.28? To despise those glorious and unconceivable joys that are at the right hand of God for evermore? Pfalm 16, 11. I profess a man would wonder that any, unless they were bereav'd of their reason, unless they had lost their fenses & feeling, that ever any man should part with fuch glorious hopes, hopes of fuch a glorious Inheritance, that surpasses what eye hath seen, or ear heard, or whatever the heart of man can conceive, 1 Cor. 2. 9. But I will tell you the reason;

the Reasons briefly are these:

First, Men despise this glorious Inheritance, because they know not the worth of it , John 4. 10, Jesus answered, and said unto ber, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that faith unto thee, give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. So, if men did but know what this heavenly Inheritance is, Oh were they but with Moses (Deut. 32. 49.) to stand upon Mount Nebo, to fee this Land afar off, to see but a glimpse of it: Or if they were with Paul (2 Cor. 12.) wrapt up into Heaven one day, nay, but a few hours, they would adventure to get through the narrow Wicker, the narrow Dore, though an Angel with a drawn Sword kept the paffage, as you read, an Angel did keep the Gate of Paradife, Gen. 3. 24. If a man faw but one glimpse of that eternal glory, he would cry

out as that Father, Dominus bic affligas, bic corrigas, corpus maximis doloribus afficias, &c. modo in eternum parcas. Oh Lord, Cut me here, wound me here, burn me here, let all the pains of Hell come upon my body, so my poor Soul may be saved, so I may come to that eternal Inheritance. But men are ignorant, and know not the worth of

it, therefore they do not prize it.

Secondly, Men undervalue this heavenly Inheritance, because they were never yet sufficiently humbled for their fins, they never had Soul-shaking humiliation and conviction upon their Spirits: they never yet feelingly groaned under the burden of fin: they never tafted the bitterness of fin, they never yet considered the wosul wages of sin. But if God now should but take such a one by the neck, as he did Job, and shake him to pieces, and set him up for a mark, and his Archers (hould compass him round about; and cleave his Reins asunder, and not spare him: and pour out his Gaul upon the ground, and break him with breach upon breach, and run upon bim like a Giant, as 7 ob complains, Chap. 16. ver. 12, 13, 14: Oh, Christ now would be Christ indeed. Heaven now would be Heaven indeed; fuch a one would fay, Oh Lord, Do with me what thou pleafest; so I may be but thine. But because men were never yet throughly humbled, therefore they never prize this glorious Inheritance. or the

Thirdly, Because men are bewitched with the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season; and why are they bewitched with them? because of the present enjoyment of them. Demas bath for saken me, having loved this present world (2 Tim. 4.10);

and he loved it, because it was present-

formers tail to Foutthly,

Fourthly, Because men are rockt asleep in the Cradle of security, the Devils Cradle: Satan makes them believe Heaven may be got with a wet Finger; and that they may come thither, what soever their course and conversation be; and that they may put off their repentance to the last Year of their lives: nay, to the last Month of the last Year; nay, to the last day of the last Month: and that one day is as good as five thousand, to make their peace with God in; and that it is a small matter to repent, and that a Lord have mercy upon thee, will serve thy turn to bring thee to Heaven. That's the second Query.

But thirdly, The third Query is this: But how will it appear, that this despising and undervaluing this heavenly Inheritance, is such a grievous Godprovoking sin? I will tell you, it will appear thus; There are two reasons I shall give you for it:

First, Because this despising of that heavenly Inheritance, speaks men to be Atheists, it proves men to be Atheists, to look at nothing but at things present: that look upon things that are seen, but never look upon things that are not seen: Things that are seen, are temporal; but things that are not seen, are spiritual and eternal. So I say, they look only at things present: and they measure their joy only by outward prosperity, and they measure their sorrow only by the want of it. Now what a dreadful thing it is for men to be Atheists!

Secondly, This despising or undervaluing of the heavenly Inheritance, it provokes the Lord so to anger, that he sware in his wrath, such despisers shall never, never taste of that Inheritance, never enjoy that they have despised. Thus did God deal with those despising Israelites, those scornful Is-

raelites

raelites in the Wilderness, that despised that pleafant Land. You may read the fad story , Numb. 14. 28, 29, 30: Says God, being exceedingly provoked to anger; Say unto them, As truly as I live, Saith the Lord as you have Spoken in mine ear, so will I do unto you; your carcasses shall fall in the Wilderness, and all that were numbred of you according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me; doubtless, ye shall not come into the Land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephuneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. Not one of those thousands that I brought out of the Land of Egypt, not one of them shall see the Land they despised. Just so will God deal with those that despise and undervalue this heavenly Inheritance. Says the Lord, Have I prepared a Kingdom, an Everlasting Kingdom, a Kingdom of Glory? Have I prepared such things as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive? Have I prepared a place of infinite and unspeakable happiness, such happiness as all the Kingdoms of the World, and the beauty, and glory, and splendor, and pleasures of them, are not worthy to be a Picture of it? what, have I provided fuch a Crown, fuch a Kingdom? and do you undervalue it? Do you not regard it? Will you not tread in the way that leads to it? As I live, faith the Lord, You shall never enter into my Rest, you shall never enjoy the Land, nor possess it. Thus I have opened the Point to you, and shewed you, that despising or undervaluing that heavenly Inheritance that God hath prepared for the Saints in Light, is a very grievous God-provoking fin. Now briefly to apply it. First

First Use; by way of Examination. Would it no be a very necessary enquiry, a very neeedful enquiry for you and me, and every one of us, in some ferious felf-reflecting thoughts, to call our felves to an account, whether we be in the number of those that despise and undervalue this heavenly Inheritance, yea or no? But it may be you will fav. We hope we are not such as despise, or undervalue this heavenly Inheritance : God forbid we should be such Atheifts. But for aniwer, Pray tell me, Art thou one that overvaluest Earth, and undervaluest Heaven? Art thou one that fayeft, I am so much taken up with the World, fo over head and ears in the World: I drive a Trade to provide for my Family, but to drive a Trade for Heaven, I have no leifure, no leifure; thou that fayest thou hast no leifure to look after Heaven, thou wilt have leifure enough to bewail the loss of Heaven, when thoufands of years are gone, and ten thousand to that. and a hundred thousand to that; all this while thou shalt be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of thy teeth, for the loss of it. When thou preferrest a present possession before a future expectation, do you not despise Heaven, and undervalue it? Commune with your own hearts: is it not as I fpeak? Do'I not speak the hearts of some of you?

Again, Are you not floathful and fecure? and do you not neglect those means that God hath appointed? Do you work out your Salvation? Do you so run that you may obtain? Do you fight the good fight of Faith? Examine your hearts, and tee if you are not secure, and neglectful of the means God hath ordained, for the obtaining of this glorious and heavenly Inheritance. Remember the speech of the Spies, Judg. 18.9, For we have

Jeen

feen the Land, and behold it is very good; and are ye still? Be not sloathful to go, and to enter to posses the Land. The Land is an exceeding good Land, all things that can be desired are there: and do you sit still? So may I say, Here is a pleasant Land, a glorious Land, a Land slowing with Milk and Honey; here are pleasures at Gods right hand for evermore, and do you sit still? will you not run?

do you not strive to enter?

Again, You fay, you do not undervalue Heaven; I beseech you consider, What, are you content to part with for Heaven? will you fell all to buy this Pearl? Will you part with any thing that stands in opposition to your hopes? Will you take Christ in his own way, and on his own terms, and . in his own time? Can you be content to fwallow down fome discouragements, and difficulties, and temptations, and bless God for them: and fay, One fmile of thy face will recompence a thousand years of advertity? If I have Christ for my portion, and Heaven in reversion, though I carry a Rod of affliction at my back every day: though I am fed with the water of affliction, and with the bread of adversity, Heaven will make amends for all. But alas! How many have weak hands, and feeble knees, and are not able to go on in the way of Salvation, and will not come up to the price of Salvation! Do not deceive your felves. These are plain down-right Truths, bottomed upon Scripture; if I fpeak not the truth, believe me not; but if I do, some of you have cause with serious self-reflection, to smite upon your Thights, and you have cause greatly to fear this despising and undervaluing this heavenly Inheritance, is your fin; and Oh that it might be your forrow and shame. I have it Second-

Secondly, This Doctrine may justly serve for to reprove (and I profess, I know no reproof sharp enough for) fuch persons as despite and undervalue that heavenly Inheritance that God hath prepared for the Saints in Light. Let me fay to some of you, as God speaks, Acts 15.41, Behold ye despifers, and wonder, and perish. So fay I, Hearken ye despisers: hearken ye secure, careles, sensles, fottish Atheists (I can call you no better); Oh, you that have fuch flight thoughts of Heaven, you that look upon this heavenly Inheritance but as imaginary, a Fools Paradife, or as a meer conceit, rather than any real existent thing: you that never yet fet your hearts and fouls to feek the Lord Tefus Chrift, and his Kingdom; you whose hearts are buried in Earth and Earthly things, who mind nothing but Earth, nothing in the World but raifing great Estates, and satisfying the brutish part of your felves: Tell me, Do you think that ever you shall enjoy this external Inheritance which you have despised? Shall you ever taste of that everlasting happiness which you have so much undervalued? Will the Lord cast Pearls before Swine? Will he hang fuch a Jewel, fuch an unvaluable Jewel, which is better worth than ten thousand Worlds? will be hang fuch a Jewel on a Swines fnout? No, no, you deceive your felves, if you think fo. Do you think that Heaven will drop into your mouths as you lie a-dying? Do you think our Saviour speaks in vain, when he fays, Matth 11.12, And from the days of John the Baptist, until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. If Heaven could be purchas'd with a Lord have mercy upon us: if it could be procured in fuch a cold, lazy, luke-warm way as you walk in, then cer-

certainly our bleffed Saviour did not know what he faid; his exhorting to strive to enter in at the strait gate, was to no purpose, But if prizing of this Salvation, and ftriving or this Salvation to the end of your lives: if these must go before enjoying, then as fure as the Lord lives, you careless, secure, fortish Sinners, that mind nothing less than that one thing necessary: assure your felves, you shall never have a portion in that Inheritance which is prepared for the Saints in Light; no, there is another place prepared for fuch Dogs and Swine (as they are called), that place without, Rev. 22. 15, For without are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Murtherers, and Idolaters. and who soever loveth and maketh a lye. You all cry out of Elan a prophane wretch, the Spirit of God brands him for it, a prophane Atheist, that fold his Birth right for a Mess of Pottage: he fold his Birth-right, which was a Type of Heaven; he fold this for an old Song (as we fay). And you that neglect, and undervalue, and despise Heaven; you are guilty of the same sin, and have you not as prophane spirits as he? You cry out of Judas, because he sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver. Oh hearken, impenitent fottilh Sinner! It may be thou fellest Christ, and Heaven, and Glory, and all, may be, for a base lust, a base lye: thou sellest it for fome considerable advantage, as thou conceivest for the present, though at last it will be like Gravel in the Throat. Take hone this reproof with you: the Lord fet it home upon your Souls, you that never fet your hearts & fouls to feek the Lord.

I have done with a word of Exhortation: That is, I befeech you, and exhort you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you would take heed.

of this God-provoking, Soul-damning fin; take heed of undervaluing this heavenly Inheritance: Let it not be faid of any of you, that you despised the pleasant Land; instead of despising it, do you highly prise it: and say as David, Psalm 119.174; I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord, and thy Law is my delight. And what a kind of longing was it? Not a cold wish, such a wish as Balaam had, O that I might die the death of the Righteous: that Heaven might drop into my mouth then, but I would live as I list; it was not such a desire: no, fays David, I have longed for thy salvation : what then? Thy Law is my delight. right longing that is accompanied with an endeavour; he rightly longs for the Salvation of God. that delights in the Commands of God. In the 123 ver. of the same Pfalm, Mine eyes fail in waiting for thy Salvation. Look as the Lord Tefus Christ will never bestow himself upon that Soul that does not pant, and breathe, and break, with longing defires after him. So likewife, he will never bestow this heavenly Inheritance upon that Soul that does not most earnestly, wishfully, and industriously pant after him; and long for him, and feek him, that you may prize him. Take heed, in the fear of God, of those four causes of undervaluing this Salvation.

First, Take heed of Earthly-mindedness; beg that you may be digged out of the thick Mire and Clay: say, Give me not my portion here, O Lord: How sad will it be with me, if thou puttest me off

only with these outward things!

Secondly, Take heed of floathfulness and fluggishness in the service of God, and in seeking this Salvation, Rom. 12. 11, Not floathful in business, fervens fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord. Seek the Lord, and seek his Salvation, with all your might, mind

and Arength.

Thirdly, Be content to part with any thing for Christ; take heed of placing your love upon the Creature; be content to part with any thing that stands in opposition to, or in competition with those glorious hopes that are laid up for the Saints in Light.

fourthly, Be contented to endure fome hardship in the way; Heaven will make amends for all: all the costs, discouragements, and difficulties that you meet with in the pursuit of your hopes, will be abundantly recompensed by one hours fruition of

that eternal happiness.

Secondly, If you would not despise or undervalue that heavenly Inheritance, learn to live by Faith, and not by sight and sense; if you live by sight and sense, you will look on the things that are seen, and not on the things that are not seen: the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen, are eternal, 2 Cor. 4. 18. If you live by Faith, you will setch your comforts from Christ, more than from any thing in the Creature.

Thirdly, If you would not despise this pleasant Land, then beg of Jesus Christ, that he would draw your Souls, that you may run after him. Quicken me with thy quickning-grace, for thy Name take; Lord, bestow thy quickning-grace upon me, that I may mind the business of Eternity seriously. Lord, help me to set about the work vigorously, that I may not trisle with thee in matters that are of insmite Concernment. I remember the speech of a Martyr, a good woman, at that time when

profession of the Gospel was enough to bring to the stake; says she, I hear there are Crowns and Kingdoms to be disposed of this day; here, take my child, I will put in for one Crown, for one Kingdom. Oh that every one of us had hearts to do as she did; let us be contented to suffer hardship for a while, that we may enjoy the pleasant Land for ever and ever.

So much for the first Branch of the Text, that is the horrible ingratitude of this people: They despised the pleasant Land. The ground of that ingratitude you have in the next words of the Text, And believed not his Word. But so much for this time.

PSAL. CVI. 24.

---- And believed not his Word.

Have spoken to this Text in one Sermon already, as you may remember; in it I took notice of two Branches:

First, Israels horrible ingratitude, in these words, They despised the pleasant Land; and that I finished last day.

Now I come to the second Branch of the Text, that is the ground of their ingratitude, in these words, They believed not his Word. What word? They believed not the Promise that God had made

RZ

unto

unto them, that he would bestow the Land of Canaan upon them; nay, God did not only promife it, but he sware unto Abraham, Isaac and Facob. Gen. 50. 24, And Joseph Said unto his Brethren. I die, and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this Land, to the Land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and Facob: But because the Spies forfooth came and told them: Oh, there are walled Cities, and Giants, and Anakims to fight with, and it is impossible for you to get possesfion of the Land; therefore they believed the Spies, but they would not believe God; they believed the report of those that told them of the Giants. but they would not believe Gods Report, they would not believe Gods Promise. So the Doctrine I shall commend to you from this second Branch of the Text, is this :

Doct. One main Reason why men do undervalue the Heavenly Canaan, and so come short of

it, is their Unbelief.

Look as it was with the Children of Ifrael, here spoken of in the Text; the sin that made them despise and undervalue the Land of Canaan, and so were debar'd and shut out of the Land of Canaan, was their Unbelief: as the Apostle shews expressly, Heb. 3. ult. So we see they could not enter in, because of unbelief. So here, One main reason why men undervalue the Heavenly Canaan, and so come short, or are deprived of the Heavenly Canaan: it is their Unbelief. Men believe lyes, but they will not believe the Truth; they believe the Devil, who is a lyar, and tells them they may come to Heaven with a wet singer, and therefore they may live as they list; but they will not believe the Lord Iesus

Tesus Christ, that tells them, Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it, Matth. 7. 14. They believe the father of lyes, but they will not believe him that is the God of Truth; who fays, Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able, Luke 13. 24. They believe the report of Satan, but they will not believe the report of the word of God, which tells us expresty, 1 Pet. 4. 18, And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinners appear? They will not believe that Doctrine (which you may remember) proved out of Heb. 4. 1, Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entring into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. Where I shewed you, that the life of a Christian is a life of fear : and that in matters of Soul-concernment, Christians should not only be very jealous of themselves, but of others also. I also shewed you, that it is possible for many that are professors of the Truth, or true Religion, to come short of Heaven; and that it is possible for many that are confident that they are in a state of grace, to come short of Heaven; and that it is possible for many to come very near to Heaven, and yet to come fhort of Heaven. But men will not believe these Truths: now their Unbelief is the cause why they slight Heaven, and shall be deprived of Heaven. For the better Explication of this Doctrine, there are two things I shall open to you:

First, What this Unbelief is, that makes men so

undervalue the Heavenly Canaan.

Secondly, Why this Unbelief is fuch a great and grievous fin, so dangerous and destructive, that

it deprives men of that Heavenly Canaan.

First, What this Unbelief is that makes men slight the Heavenly Canaan: For answer to this, you must know there is a twofold Unbelief:

There is a Negative And Unbelief.

First, There is a Negative Unbelief; and that is the fin of Pagans and Heathens, that never heard of God, nor of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; they believe not, because they know not: they know not God, Kom. 10. 14, How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? This is the fin of Pagans: this ignorance it excuses in part, though not in whole; their fin is not fo great by far, as the fin of those that do profess the Gospel; yet their Negative unbelief is a fin, because Gods Commandment is, That we should believe on the Name of the Lord Jefus Christ, 1 John 3.23, And this is his commandment, that we believe in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ. But this is the Negative unbelief: this concerns not us, but it concerns those that know not God.

Secondly, There is a Positive Unbelief; and this is, when men are ready to distrust Gods Power, and his Providence, and his Promises; or, when we do not so siducially rest upon them, as to obey the Gospel. This is a Positive unbelief; this is the sin which is so dangerous. Now you must know

this Positive Unbelief is twofold:

First, Temporary. Secondly, Total, or Final.

First, There is a Temporary unbelief; and this

is that which may befall even Gods own Elect, they may be under unbelief for a while. True, it is possible for an Elect Child of God, to be under an act of unbelief, though he cannot be brought into a state of unbelief; for you must distinguish between these two: between a state of unbelief, and an act of unbelief. A Child of God may be under an act of unbelief: so you know was Godly Zachariah (Elizabeth's husband), he was under an act of unbelief: And behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believedst not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season, Luke 1.20. And Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles, he was under an act of unbelief, when he faid, Unless I shall see in his hands the print of the Nails, and put my finger into the print of the Nails, and thrust my hand into his fide, I will not believe, Joh. 20. 25. So were all the rest of the Apostles under an act of unbelief for a while; therefore our Saviour when he was rifen again, he upbraided them (the Text fays) with their unbelief, Mark 16.14, After he appeared to the Eleven as they fate at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. This is a Temporary Unbelief.

Secondly, There is a Total or Final unbelief, and that is the fin of those that live in a state of impenitency, and abide in that condition; those that abide in their unbelief, until the wrath of God abides upon them. You see what this unbelief is: a distrusting of Gods Power, and Providences, and Promises; and that not for a time, which may be the condition of a Child of God; but when it

is a Total and Final unbelief. That's the first thing

for Explication.

Secondly, By way of Explication; it may be demanded, Why, is this such a dangerous and destructive sin, that it does debar men of this Heavenly Canaan? I shall give you these three Reasons of it.

First, Because you must know it is a sin that robs God of his Glory. Look, as by believing we do most of all honour God; for by this we set to our Seal that he is true, John 3. 33, He that hath received his Testimony, hath set to his Seal that God is true. By believing, we give him the honour of his Truth, and Faithfulness, and Mercy, and Goodness, and Power. Thus Abraham by believing, gave glory to God, in Rom. 4. 20, He staggered not at the Promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. So on the contrary, by unbelief we dishonour him in a high degree: nay, in the highest degree that can be named, because we make him a Liar, 1 John 5. 10, He that believeth on the Son of God, bath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God, hath made him a Liar, because he believeth not the Record that God gave him of his Son. Now what greater reproach or dishonour can be cast upon a man of worth, than to give him the lye? Unbelief therefore is a bold fin; it steps into Gods Cabinet, as I may fay, and it robs him of the choicest Jewel that he hath; namely, his Glory : which he hath faid, He will not give to another, 1/a. 42. 8, I am the Lord, that is my Name, and my Glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to the graven Images. The glory of God, it is nothing else but the reputation that God hath in the World. Take away Gods glory, and

and the reputation that he hath among the Sons of men, then (with reverence be it spoken) he is little worth in the eyes of men. Now Unbelief is

that that robs God of his Glory.

Secondly, Unbelief is fuch a dangerous destru-Rive sin, because it is the first sin that ever was in the World. As it is the mother of all other fins, fo it was the first sin whereby the Devil got entrance into the heart of man. I know there is a dispute amongst Divines, What was the first fin our first Parents were guilty of, whether Pride, or Unbelief? without all doubt it was Unbelief; for God told our first Parents expresly, Whenever they did eat of the Tree of life, they should die the death : as fure as they lived, they should die; but the Devil he goes and tells them, You shall not die. Now mark: they believed the Devil, more than they believed God; Unbelief therefore was the first sin that ever was committed in the World: and as it was the first sin whereby the Devil got entrance into the heart of man, fo may it be faid to be the root and mother of all other fins; therefore fays the Apostle, Take heed, Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, Heb. 3. 12. Look as Faith may be faid to be the Mother of all other Graces, becaufe Faith lets in Jesus Christ into the Soul, and · fo purifies the heart : Act. 15.9, And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by Faith: it applyes the purifying-blood of Jesus Christ: So on the other side, Unbelief may be faid to be the mother of all other fins, because it keeps out Christ, and keeps out Grace, and polutes the heart, and defiles it, and makes it no better than a Den for Satan to lodg in. It is a good

observation of an eminent Divine, whom for honour fake I mention , namely, Doctor Sibs : Look as the first return of the Soul to God, is by Faith; fo the first departing of the Soul from God, is by Unbelief; for, from thence comes a departing to other fins; and so unbelief being encreased, the rent that is made between God and the Soul, the estrangement between God and the Soul, is still made wider and wider; and so the Soul departs further and further, and is still departing, and departing from one fin to another, till at last it comes to hear that fatal and final fentence, Matth. 25, Depart thou curfed wretch into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. Well therefore may Unbelief be faid to be the Mother of all other fins. Unbelief and Apostacy are very near akin: Unbelief may in some sense be said to be all disobedience. The same Greek word that signifies unbelief, fignifies alto difobedience, Col. 3.6, For these things sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of unbelief, or children of disobedience. And well may it be faid to be the Mother of disobedience: for what sin is there so gross and grievous, that an unbeliever will not run into? If a man believe not the threatnings, he will practice no good: For example, if a man do but believe that terrble Scripture, Rev. 21.8, But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and Murderers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all Lyars, shall have their part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone, which is the second Death. If a man did believe that Scripture, durst he be a Coward to betray the Truths of God? God speaks of the fearful ones in that fense, to be cowardly Christians: did

he believe this? durst he be such an abominable wretch, to run into fuch abominable blasphemies (which are not to be named) which are belched out against God in these days? Durst he be an Idolater, a Lyar, a Swearer? certainly he durst not; but he does not believe the Threatnings of God. If a Tyrant should threaten any of you with the Rack, or Strapado, which would break your bones: Oh, what terror and trembling would take hold of you! how would you fall down at his feet, and feek his face and favour ! yet that Tyrant could take away nothing but a poor, miserable, mortal life: But the great God of Heaven, he threatens Sinners with the punishment of loss: the loss of his presence, of his favour, of fellowship with him in Glory; nay, he threatens with the punishment of Sense, those unconceivable tortures and torments in Hell for ever, to all Eternity; and yet Sinners do not tremble at this great God, they do not fall down and feek his face and favour; What is the reason? because they believe not. If fo be a faithful man, that was never yet known to break his word, and a man of a great Estate, that was able to make good his promife; if he should promife any of you an Inheritance of two or three hundred by the year, you would believe that man on his word, and you would feek to pleafe him, you would prize his fayour; but now the great God of Heaven and Earth, that was never yet known to break his Word: he tells you of an heavenly Inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, reserved in Heaven; and yet do you not feek to pleafe him, or prize his fayour or obey him? what's the reason? Because you believe not his Word. So the truth is, unbelief

is the Mother of all disobedience. That's the se-

Thirdly, Unbelief is a fin thus dangerous and destructive to the Soul, because God hath provided more Antidotes and Remedies against this sin of unbelief, than against any other sin, to cure this sin of Unbelief.

First, God hath given us his Word, which is a most faithful Word: Heaven and Earth shall pass away (faith our Saviour) but my words shall not

pass away, Matth. 24. 35.

Secondly, God hath given us his Promises. Now all his Promises are sure and certain, Yea and Amen; God is faithful, and will make good his promises, 2 Cor. 1.20, For all the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him are Amen, unto the glory of

Godby us.

Thirdly, He hath given us his Covenant: and this Covenant is sure and stedsast, and ordered in all things, an everlasting Covenant, sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ, and cannot be altered, 2Sam. 23. 5, Although my House be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my Salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.

Fourthly, He hath given us his Oath, Ezek. 16. 8, Yea, I sware unto thee, and entred into a Covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. Now an Oath you know is the strongest bond of assurance between man and man. And the Apostle speaking of the Word of God, and of the Oath of God: that they are two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lye, Heb. 6. 17, 18, Wherein God willing more abun-

abundantly to shew unto the Heirs of the Promise, the immutability of his Counsel, consirmed it by an Oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us. As it is impossible for God to die, because he is life it self; so it is impossible for God to lye, because he is Truth it self.

Fifthly, Because he hath given us his Seal also: he hath given us his outward Seal, which is the Sacrament, both the Sacrament of Baptism, and the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; he hath given us also his inward Seal, which is the Witness and Testimony of his own blessed Spirit, sealing us up to

the day of Redemption.

Sixthly, He hath given us Experiences; former Experiences, and latter Experiences: the Experience of all the Saints that have gone before us, Psalm 22. 4, Our Fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. So in Psalm 34.6, This poor man cryed (speaking of himself) when he was in as low a condition as ever he was in: (scrabling on the ground, and feigning himself mad, I Sam. 21. 13,) fays he, This poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his trouble; Therefore others will be exceeding glad, when they hear how graciously he hath dealt with them. So in Pfalm 9. 10, They that know thy Name, will put their trust in thee; for thon Lord hast not for saken them that seek thee. God hath given us experiences, he hath given us all these Antidotes and Preservatives against unbelief; hearken therefore, O Unbeliever! Well, If thou do not believe, thou must perish everlast-

ingly; God remains faithful, and cannot deny himfelf, 2 Tim. 2. 13, If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself. But if thou do believe and perish; if thou do believe, and yet art damned: then God hath broken his Word, and broken his Promise, and broken his Covenants. and broken his Oath, and broken the Seals of his Covenant; which is as impossible, as for God to cease to be God. You see God hath provided so many Remedies and Antidotes against Unbelief, therefore unbelief is fuch a dangerous and destru-Rive fin. It is observable, when our Saviour came to his own Countrey, that was Nazareth, and preach'd to his own Country-men, and did Miracles among them, they believed not; The Text fays, Mark 6.6, He marvelled because of their nubelief. You do not read he marvelled at other fins: as Ignorance, Hypocrisse, Pride, Covetousness, &c. but our Saviour marvelled at their unbelief. Oh, when men shall fin against the Word of God, and the Promise of God, and the Covenant of God, and the Oath of God, and the Seal of God: Heaven and Earth may fland amazed at their incredible incredulity. Thus you fee the Point opened.

For the Use and Application of the Point.

First, By way of Examination: I beseech you to bring your hearts to the Touch-stone, and see whether you be guilty of this sin of unbelief, yea, or no. I know every one of you will be ready to plead, Not guilty; Oh, we do believe the Word of God, and pity we should live, if we did not believe the Word: But let me tell you, This is an inward, secret, lurking sin, therefore not easily discerned. But that you may know whether you be guilty

guilty of this fin or no, I will give you these four plain undeniable Scripture-Evidences; the Lord make you your own Judges in this particular.

First, When men do slight the invitations of Telus Christ, slight the prosfers of his Grace, it is a token there is unbelief in the bottom: for where Faith is once wrought in the heart, there is instantly and readily a closing between Christ and the Soul: there is a ready closure, as there is between the Load-stone and the Iron: When Jesus Christ fays to a poor sinner, Come to me, though thou art weary and heavy laden; the Believing Soul closes prefently with Christ, and answers, Come thee, Lord; I, I will creep to thee upon my hands and feet : When Christ fays to it again: Do this, or Do that; the Soul fays again, O Lord, give me strength to do what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt. But now, when you find in you a backwardness to entertain Jesus Christ in your hearts, this is a certain and undeniable evidence of your unbelief; and is not this your fin? Alas, alas, let Jesus Christ be tendred in the Ministry of the Word from day to day; let him be proffered in the sweetest anst softest terms of Perfwasions and Exhortations; let Ministers use their best Art and Arguments to woo, entreat, invite, and befeech you to accept of the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is tendred to you in the Gospel; and yet alas, we poor Ministers can get no audience; I fpeak of the most of you, not of all: scarce one of ten, scarce one of a hundred, will hearken to this Gospel-invitation, to come unto Jesus Christ, and to fubmit to him, and to take him upon Gospelterms. Our Saviour complains, in John 5. 40, And ye will not come sinto me, that ye may have life. Though

Though I would give you life, a life of Righteousnels, a life of Grace, a life of Glory, Tet you will not come to me; that is, You will not believe in me : you will not embrace me ; you will not fubmit to me; you will not solace your Souls in me. Let the World call, and you run straight: let the flesh call, and you obey it straight in the lusts of it; nay, let Satan call, and you readily hearken to him; but you will not hearken to me. Just so may the Ministers of the Gospel at this day complain, Lord, Thou fendest us upon this Errand, to bring Sinners in to thee: thou fendest us upon the same Message Abraham sent his Servant, to get a Wife for his Son Isaac: Abraham gave his Servant Rings, and Jewels, and Bracelets, to bestow upon her that would be Wife to I/aac. So our Lord fends us with Rings, and Jewels, and Bracelets: we have many Motives and Arguments to invite Sinners, and to perswale and draw them: But Lord, we can do no good in our Ministry; we tell men of the unsearchable Riches of Jesus Christ; and what an unvaluable portion they shall have in him, but they will not believe; Lord, Who hath believed our Report? Now, when there is a flighting of those invitations and proffers of Gospel-grace, it is a certain token of Unbelief. And that's the first Sign or Character of Unbelief.

Secondly, When men undervalue Christs Perfon, and Portion; this is a token of unbelief. We tell men of the Beauty of Christs Person, that he is white and ruddy; white in his Innocency, and ruddy in his Passion, the choisest of tenthousand, Cant. 5. 10: and that there is nothing in him but brightness, and sweetness, and beauty, and sulness, and all sufficiency, yet men believe it not; They see

no beauty in him, why they should desire him, Ifa. 53. 3. Nay, What is thy beloved more than other Beloveds? fay they, Cant. 9. 9. So when we tell men of the invaluable portion they shall have by the Lord Jesus Christ, those unsearchable Riches, the riches of his Merits, and the riches of his Spirit, and that rich and royal Redemption, and that they shall have whatever their hearts can defire; we tell them of this, they shall have a portion of grace, Jesus Christ will give them grace for grace; for every grace in himself, he will give them part of it: by his Wisdom, they shall be made wife; by his Holiness, they shall be made holy; he will give them a portion of Glory, a Crown of Eternal glory to them that love him: but because they fee not this Portion, this Crown of glory, they will not believe it, they will not believe further than they fee, they are all for prefent pay: Demas hath for saken me, having embraced this present world: They will have good things for the selent: as for future expectations, they regard them not. Where there is an undervaluing of Christs person, or portion, there is a great deal of unbelief.

Thirdly, When men are secure and searless, it is a certain effect, and sign, and symptom of unbelies: for Faith breeds fear, Heb. 11.7, By Faith Neah being warned of God, of things not seen, as yet moved with fear, prepared an Ark, to the saving of his honse: by the which he condemned the World, and became heir of the righteousness which is by Faith. Faith makes men sear: But now when men do not stand in awe of God, of the great God, that is within its, without its, above us, about us: when we do not walk as in his eye, nor walk as in his presence; when men do not stand in awe of

the Word of God, and fay with David, Pfalm 119, 161, Princes have persecuted me without a cause, but my heart standeth in ame of thy Word: As if he should fay, I more stand in awe of thy Word, than of all the Princes of the World. When men are fo over-awed by the Word of God, as that they dare not fin against God; for the Word of God stands as a Schoolmaster stands with a Rod in his hands over a Boy, fo that he dare not act any untowardness. When men are not over-awed by the Word, but they fin and spare not, they fin and grieve not, this is a token of their unbelief: they do not believe God is Omniscient, Omniprefent; they do not believe his Justice, they do not believe his Truth. Where men are thus fearless and secure, it is a plain token of their exceeding

great unbelief.

Fourthly, A fourth Sign of unbelief, is this: when men profess one thing, and practice another thing: when their practice croffes their Profession, this is a certain token of reigning unbelief. Let me give you fome instances: For example, You profess God to be your Soveraign Lord, and King, and Law-giver, and that you have but one Lawgiver, which is God; and that he has power to lave and to destroy, James 4. 12, There is one Lawgiver, who hath power to fave and to destroy. And you profess, That he can do whatsoever he pleaseth in Heaven and in Earth, and among all the Inhabitants of the Earth: and that none can stay his hand, none can say unto him, what dost thou? Dan. 4. 35. You profess this God to be your Soveraign, yet for all this you make no bones of flighting his . Authority: you dare flight the Authority of this Law-giver, and make no bones of breaking his Comle

n

S

y

Commandments. You can break the first Commandment by Atheism, impenitency, hardness of heart, lukewarmneis, unthankfulneis: You can break the second Commandment, by neglecting, or mif-performing the duties of Gods Worship and Service: You can break the third Commandment, by not honouring God, by not glorifying God; you do not fanctifie and honour his Name, in his Word, in his Works, in his Providences, in his Ordinances, in his Mercies. You make no bones, I fay, of breaking his Commands. Thus you profess one thing : you fay, that the Lord is your Lord, your Law-giver; but you practice another, when you flight his Authority, and break his Commands. See how angrily our Saviour speaks, Luke 6.46, And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I command you ?- Again, You profess you believe the threatnings of God, fuch dreadful threatnings as these: Woon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their Cup, Pfalm 11. 6. So Pfalm 68.21, God fhall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses. You profess you believe these threatnings, but yet notwithstanding your practice crosses your Profession: for, let a Minister come and thunder these threatnings in your ears: yea, let a Minister come and spit fire and vengeance in the face of Sinners, yet notwithstanding, they do no more tremble than the feat they fit on. It were well if some Snners had but as much fear as the Devils have (James 2. 19.) for they believe the threatnings of God, and fear them, and know they shall be accomplished to the uttermost.

Thirdly, You profess that you believe the Promiles: 1, that you do: I, but what Promiles do you believe? You believe the Promife of Eternal life, because you believe Tesus Christ will be your Saviour : I, but do you believe the Promises (for example) for this life: Do you believe, if you feek the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness in the first place, all other things shall be cast into the Bargain? Matth. 6. 33. Again, Do you believe that Promiles Pfalm 34. 10, The young Lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that feek the Lord, shall not want any good thing. Do you believe the Promiles for this life? let that be judged by your Covetoulnels, by your carking carefulness: that distracting, dividing care, that divides the mind from it felf. See what the Prophet If aich fays, Ifa. 28. 16, He that believeth, Shall not make hafte. He therefore that does make hafte to be rich, does not believe; He that makes hafte to be rich, shall not be innocent, faith Solomon, Prov. 28. 20. You therefore that make fo much hafte to be rich : you that make fo much buffing in the World: wherefore is this craving, carking, whining after the things of this life? It is a certain undeniable evidence of your diffrufting Gods Providence and Promites: and let me tell you, You that will not believe him for the Body, you will never believe him for the Soul; You that will not believe him for your Estates and Children, you will never believe him for your Eternal Salvation; You that will not believe him for a Cruft, you will never believe him for a Crown: And yet you lay, you believe his Promises, that you do.

Fourthly, You fay, you believe in the mercy of God for pardon: I, but when once Satan comes

bo

C

u

34

r

f

5

to shake your confidence but a little, when you lie but under any temptation; when God feems to hide away his face from you, though never fo little, in the day of your fears and straits: then you are ready to question, whether you are the Children of God, or no? whether there be any thing of God in you, or no? you are ready to fay then as Sion did, Ifa. 49. 14, The Lord hath for faken me, my Lord hath forgotten me; my way is hidden from the Lord, and my judgment from the Almighty. It may be you may come to that condition, to fay with Cain, My punishment is greater than I can bear, my sin is greater than can be forgiven, Gen. 4. God will never forgive fuch great fins as mine are. You fay, that you believe in the mercy of God; but when it comes to the trial, it will be found no fuch matter.

Fifthly, Again, You say you believe a day of Judgment, this is one thing you profess; I, but your practice is quite contrary: for, did you believe it seriously, then you would pass the time of your sojourning here in fear, I Pet. 1.17. Did you believe it seriously, then you would be affected with it, as that ancient Father was: Whether I eat, or drink, or whatever I do, methinks I hear the Trumpet sounding in mine ears, Arise ye dead, and come to judgment. If you did believe the terror of the Lord, 2 Cor. 5. 11, certainly then you would exercise your selves to have Consciences void of offence, both towards God and men, Acts 24. 16.

Sixthly, You say, you believe that there will be a Resurrection of the Body: and yet notwithstanding you carry your selves here upon the Earth, as if so be there was no account or reckoning to come. Some may be can live, (I am even as framed

S 3

to speak it), they can live as if they had no God to ferve, and no Souls to fave; as if there would never come a day wherein they must appear before their Judg. I remember the speech of Saint Paul to King Agrippa, Acts 26. 27, King Agrippa, Believest thou the Prophets? I know (fays he) that thou believest. But I may tay to many an impenitent, unregenerate, obstinate, perverse Sinner (Oh that there were none fuch in this Congregation; I may fay to many fuch Sinners) Believest thou the Word of God? Believest thou the Threatnings of God? I know thou believest them not. If thou did believe the Commands of God, Oh then thou wouldest fay with Saint Panl, What wouldest thou have me to do, Lord? Acts 9.6, Teach me the way of thy Statutes, O Lord, and I will walk in it, and I will keep it to the end, Pfalm 119. 33. If thou didst believe the Threatnings of God, then thou wouldst be in the same condition that David was in, Psalm 119.12, My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments. If thou didst believe those dreadful Threatnings, thou wouldst be in the same condition with the Prophet Habakkuk; My belly trembled, my lips quivered, rottenness entred into my bones, and I trembled in my felf, Hab. 3. 16 .-- If so be thou didst believe the Promises, Oh, thou wouldst embrace them; thou wouldst fuck and be fatisfied with those Breafts of Consolation, Ma. 66. 11. It is faid of the Patriarchs, They faw the Promises afar off, and embraced them, Heb. 11. 13. But now, when thou fayest, thou believest the Commands of God, and yet never obeyest his Commands: thou fayest, thou believest his Threatnings, and yet never tremblest at any Threatning; thou fayeft, thou beliveft the Pro-

mife.

Promises, and yet art no way thereby encouraged to a more active, and fruitful, and chearful walking with God: then thy Belief crosses thy Profession. And this is a certain and undeniable Evidence of Unbelief: the Lord awaken some of you, and convince you, and send you home to your own hearts, to see how deeply you stand guilty of this sin my Text speaks of: for if there be not reigning unbelief in many of you, for my part I do not understand the Scripture.

I shall close with a word of Exhortation.

Is it so, That Unbelief is one main cause why so many men despise and undervalue that Heavenly Canan, and are debar'd from that Heavenly Canan? Then I have a twofold Exhortation to tender to you: The

First is to those that are Regenerate.

Secondly: To those that are Unregenerate. First, To those that are Regenerate: And my Counsel to you, is this, Oh do not mourn for the dregs of this fin that yet remain in you: there are dregs of Unbelief, even in those that are true-Believers. That man or woman that is not fenfible of the dregs of this fin in him, I fay, then he is a stranger to his own heart. In Heb. 13.5, fays the Apostle, Let your Conversation be without Covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor for sake thee. There you have a Promise, He hath faid; Who is it that hath faid it? The Great God of Heaven and Earth, that can make it good; How hath he faid it? how? with the greatest earnestness or affeveration that ever Promise was made; for he that hath skill in the Greek Tongue, shall find there five Negatives in that one Promile, & mi oe ava, id, & min oe equaration, I will not for sake thee; that is not enough: but fays God, Be affured, I will not for sake thee : no, no, no, no, I will not for fake thee; to many No's. therefore be affured. As if the Lord should fay. it as the greatest Asseveration, and with the greatest earnestness, that ever we read of any Promise made with. Yet, let me tell you (and it is what you will find by your own experience), Though in time of prosperity it is an easie matter to prefume: yet in time of adversity, it is a hard matter to believe this Promise; when we come into straitness, to fay, God will not leave me nor forfake me, he will not leave me in the Bryars: nay, though you and I have had experience of Gods faithfulness to this day, we had experience of his faithfulness when we were in our Mothers womb. As a learned man once faid, If a man should live to the days of Methuselah: if he should live a thousand years, he could never have that experience of Gods power, and tender-mercy to him, as he had when God preserved him in his mothers womb, and took him out of his mothers belly. We have had experience of Gods preferving us then: and we have lived upon him ever fince, fome twenty, some thirty, some forty, some fifty years; all this time God did never leave us, nor forsake us: yet if we be in straits, we find it a very hard matter to believe that one Promise, I will never leave thee, nor forfake thee. Oh therefore bewail, and bemoan the dregs of Unbelief: cry out with that good man, Lord, I believe; I would be-lieve, belp my unbelief. That is the first Exhortation.

Secondly, I have an Exhortation to those that are in a state of unbelief, unregenerate, impenitent wretches,

wretches that go on in fin, and will not be reclaimed, that flight the invitations of Jesus Christ, and the proffers of his Grace. My Counsel to you is this, and I have but two words of Counsel to tender to you:

First, Be sensible of this sin.

Secondly, Labour to get this sin removed.

First, Be sensible of this sin; be sensible of the greatness of it, be sensible of the hairous nature of it: what? to turn the Truth of God into a Lye: what? to make the great God of Heaven and Earth a Lyar: what? to rob him of his Glory: what? to go into his Cabinet, and steal away his chiefest sewel: Can there be a greater sin?—Be sensible of the danger of this sin, it brings imminent and unavoidable destruction along with it. Tremble at that Scripture, John 3. 18, He that believeth not, it soundemen d already, because he hath not believed on the Name of the only begotten Son of God; he is condemned: a sentence of death is past upon thee, if thou be in a state of Unbelief.

Secondly, My other word of Counsel is this:
Oh labour, labour to get this cursed sin of unbelief destroyed in you: O let this sin be destroyed, or else thou must be destroyed: But you will say, How shall we get this sin of unbelief cured? I will tell you, Will you hearken to me in sour or sive

Rules? and then I have done.

First, Take heed of Atheism; for I profess, we are fallen into days of Atheism, and all our Religion (if the Lord be not merciful to us) will end in Atheism; Insidelism and Atheism, there is but one step between them: what is Atheism, but when men will not believe there is a God? all Insidelity springs from Aheism. But you will say, When, do you think

we are Atheists? Do you think that we believe there is not a God? Let me tell you, There are Atheifts in Opinion, as well as Atheifts in Language: The Fool hath faid in his heart, there is no God; there are Atheists in Fractice, as well as Atheists in profesfion; They profess they know God, but in works they deny bim. Take heed therefore of this curfed fin of Atheism.

Secondly, Would you have Unbelief removed. then learn to know more of God: to know more of his Goodness, Wisdom, Holiness, Purity, Perfection, and other of his glorious Attributes: They that know thy Name, will put their trust in thee. I am fure, did you but know him, you would believe in him; you would obey him, you would fear before him. I know whom I have believed, faith St. Paul, 2 Tim. 1. 12.

Thirdly, Refolve to practice what you do know if you would be Believers: you must know that there are many things a man may believe notionally, which he does not believe practically: I shall give you an instance. There is never a one of you that hears me this day, but believes you are mortal : you believe you shall die, you verily believe that, as you believe there is a Sun in the Firmament: yet notwithstanding, though you do believe this; yet many of you can live as fecurely, as merrily and madly, as if so be you should never drop down into the dust; here now indeed is a notional Faith; I, but there is not a practical Faith: it is one thing to believe a Truth notionally, and another thing to believe it practically.

Fourthly, Would you have Unbelief removed? then, Oh beg, and beg earnestly, that God would take away your hearts of stone, and give you hearts of flesh: let this be your Prayer every day. Do you not remember how I opened that Text to you, A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, Ezek. 36. 26? What is a stony-heart, but a sensless heart, a heart sensless of sin, and a heart fearless of wrath? Now, do but observe, that unbelief and hardness of heart, they still go together. In Mark 16. 14, Afterwards he appeared unto the eleven, as they sate at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart. Our Saviour upbraids them for their unbelief and hardness of heart; Why are you so backward to believe? it is because of the hardness of your hearts.

Fifthly, I beseech you to meditate often of the danger of Unbelief; meditate often what will be the woful Effects and Iffues of your Unbelief: confider the Threatnings, the Precepts, and the Promifes of the Almighty. In John 8. 24, I faid therefore unto you, that you shall die in your sins: for if you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your fins. What? die in fin! Oh, what greater curie can possibly be uttered! To die in fin, to rot in fin, to come out of your graves in fin, to be presented before your Judg in your fins! John 3. ult. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. The wrath of God abideth on him: If it were only for a few days, it might be born; I, but it will be abiding, and abiding, and abiding to all Eternity: the wrath of God will abide upon that Soul that does not believe. In a word, and fo I have done: As God speaks to the Propher in another case, They will

not fee, but they shall fee: I apply it thus, You that will not believe, I promise you, you shall believe; you that will not believe favingly, you shall believe desperately; you that will not believe that God is so just, so strict; so severe; you shall believe when you feel the wrath of the Almighty seizing upon you, never to be removed; you that will not believe now to the saving of your Souls, you shall believe as the Devils, to believe and tremble: you then will believe the torments of Hell in that day, when you feel them in that place where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth: It is better to believe these things now, than believe them when you feel them. The Lord work these things upon our hearts, that this Soul-destroying sin may not be our ruin.

the state of the s

to enguel Wiele of the compact

the what is selected adulted as he were only was affew Case at the goal limit to be received by was affew

righter edge van de State of the state of the second of the second of the state of

divisition of the bound of the second second

ond select day' as a Budle Sale

CHRIST'S

the day the same they

CHRISTS'S PRECIOUSNESS.

1 PET. II. 7.

Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious; but unto them which are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the Head of the Corner.

HE holy Apostle, that he might the better draw Christians to believe in Jesus Christ; to love him, embrace him, and obey him as the Captain of their Salvation; in the beginning of this Chapter commends to them both the Word of Christ, and Christ himself, who is the Kirnel and Substance of the Word: he commends the Word of Christ to them, in the first and second verses of this Chapter: Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrises, and envies, and evil speakings; as

new-born Babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby. And he commends Jesus

Christ himself to them two ways:

First,

First, By shewing what he is in himself.

Secondly, By shewing what benefits Believers

have by him.

First, He shews what the Lord Jesus Christ is in himself; in ver, 4, To whom, coming as to a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. He is a living stone, a stone that hath life in himself,, and a stone that gives life unto others: For he that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life, I John 5. 12. -And not only a living stone, but he is chosen of God, and very precious; the Pearl of the Goipel, that precious only excellent one, in comparison of whom all the Kingdoms of the World are but as a heap of dung :- But then, as the Apostle commends him for what he is in himself, so he commends Jesus Christ, by what he hath done for all those that believe in him. In the 5th ver. To also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual House, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Tefus Christ. This invaluable benefit you shall have by him; you shall not only be justified by him; but you shall be sanctified: you shall be made a holy Priesthood, and all your fervices shall be made acceptable through him. confirm this weighty Truth, the Apostle produces a Testimony out of the Prophet Isaiah, 1/a.28,16, Therefore faith the Lord God; Behold, I lay in Sion for a Foundation, a stone, a tryed stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth, shall not make baste. Having thus confirmed this Dostrine, he makes Application of it in this Verse: and this Application is by way of Comfort to Believers, and discomfort to those that believe not. First, It is a Doctrine that affords 1001

affords a great deal of comfort to Believers: For, fays he, to you that believe, Jesus Christ is precious: But it administers a great deal of discomfort to Unbelievers, To them that are disobedient, to them that hearken not to the voice of Christ; for, fays the Apostle, Though this Christ be despised by them, yet he shall be infinitely advanced : he is become the Head, the Corner-stone: and they, notwithstanding their despising of him, shall be everlaftingly ruined; for he will be to them a frumbling-stone, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient. This is the Connexion, or Context of these words with the former. It is the first Branch of the Text here that I principally aim at, in these words, To you therefore that believe, he is precious. The words (therefore) hath reference unto the fore-going verse: wherein the Apostle tells us, that the Lord Tesus Christ is such a Foundation-stone, such a Corner-stone, such a rock of Salvation, that whofoever believes in him, shall not be confounded, shall not be condemned; For there is no condemnation to them that have a part and interest in him, Rom. 8. 1. Therefore faith the Apostle, Certainly to you he must needs be very precious: As if he should fay, You have an infinite, and an invaluable benefit by him, therefore you have great reason so highly to prize him; Unto you that do believe: that is, that can rest and rely upon this Rock of Salvation, that can pawn your Souls upon him, that can close with him, and cleave to him, and obey him as your Prince and your Saviour; Unto you, fays the Apostle, he is precious; or, he is a price and an honour, for fo the Original word Tiph fignifies : he is not only precious, but of infinite price; he is not

not only honourable, but honour it self in the Abstract: for the word riph, signifies both price and honour. The words being thus opended, afford these two Points of Doctrine, which lie clear in the Text.

Doct. 1. That the Lord Jesus Christ is infinitely precious in himself.

Doct. 2. As Jesus Christ is precious in himself, so he is exceeding precious in the eyes of all Believers: and most highly prized by them.

Doct. 1. That the Lord Jesus Christ is infinitely

precious in bimself.

He is called in the 4th verse of this Chapter, A living stone, chosen of God, and precious. And in Isa. 28. 16, Therefore thus saith the Lord God; be-bold, I lay in Sion for a foundation, a stone, a tryed stone, a precious Corner-stone, a sure Foundation. For the better understanding of this Point, two things are to be opened:

First, What it is to be Precious, or what may be

included in this Phrase, precious.

Secondly, How this may be applyed to Jefus Christ; or wherein the preciousness of Jefus Christ

confifts.

First, What is it to be precious? What is included in this Phrase, precious? The Hebrew word signifies divers things: I will name you but these five or six; and every one of those significations, are rightly applicable to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometimes the word precious, is taken for bright and glorious. Thus the Sun and the Moon are said to walk in brightness, Job 3 N 26, If I beheld

the

fo

fu

be

CO

of

the Sun when it shined, or the Moon walking in brightness. Tob there speaking of the Moon, tays, it walks in brightness: it walks as it were through the Heavens honourably, it walks in a great deal of brightness and glory. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ in this sense is precious, because he is the glorious sun of Righteousness; as he is called, Mal. 4. 2, Unto you that fear my Name, shall the sun of Righteousness arise with healing under his wings. And he calls himself the bright Morning-Star, in Rev. 22, 16, I am the bright Morning-Star. Again,

Secondly, The word precious, is taken sometimes for that that is scarce and rare to be had; for that which is not bestowed upon all, but upon some few persons. Thus the Word of God in Samuel's time, was faid to be precious, I Sam. 1. 1, And the Word of the Lord was precious in those days: there was no open Vision; it was communicated but to a few. And in this fenfe also the Lord Jesus Christ may be faid to be precions, because he is communicated but to a very few ; A little Flock, Luke 12. 32, A little little Flock, as the word fignifies, a very little Flock in comparison of those that have no interest in him, nor any benefit by him : For not. many mise men after the flesh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called, 1 Cor. 1. 26. There are but few; very few in comparison of the great multitude that have an interest in him: in that regard he is precions.

Thirdly, Sometimes the word precious is taken for that which is dear and costly. So the Lord Jesus Christ is very dear to his Father; the dearly beloved Son of his bosom, and his blood is very costly; it is called, precious blood. If the blood of all the Princes upon Earth had been spilt: nay,

T

if all the Angels in Heaven had lost their lives, it had not been comparable to one drop of the precious blood of Jesus Christ, which is called the blood of God, Acts 20. 28, Take heed therefore unto your selves, and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, to feed the Church of God, which be bath purchased with his own blood.

Fourthly, The word precious, sometimes is taken for that which is pleasant and delightful, Jer. 31.20, Is Ephraim my dear Son? is he a pleasant Child? There is the same word for precious, called pleasant. In this regard the Lord Jesus Christ may be called precious, because he is so delightful to the Father, Isa. 42. 1, Behold my servant whom I uphold: mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth.

Fifthly, That may be said to be precious, that is of very great and invaluable use, or that whereof we have an indispensable necessity. Now in this sense also Jesus Christ is precious, he is of infinite use to a Believer; such indispensable need have we of him, that without him we must perish everlastingly; Except ye eat the sless of Christ, and drink his blood, you have no life in you, John 6.53.

Lastly, That is said to be precious, which is honourable; Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore I will give men for thee, and people for thy life, Isa. 43. 4. And as I told you even now, the Original word with, signifieth honour, as well as price. So the Lord Jesus Christ he is infinitely honourable, honourable in himself; all the Angels honour and admire him: and he is an Honour to his Church and Chosen, to all those that have a part and interest in him; therefore he is said to

be The glory of his people Ifrael, Luke 2. 32, A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Ifrael. You fee the first thing opened, What it is to be precious.

Now the second thing for Explication, is this: How this Title precious may be applyed to Jesus Christ or wherein does the preciousness of Jesus Christ so much appear?—For answer to this, You must know, the preciousness of Jesus Christ, does

appear in thefe fix Particulars:

First, He is exceeding, infinitely, unconceivably precious in his Person, God and Man united in one Person, Co-effential with the Father: that is, having the same Essence and Substance with him; in John 10. 30, I and my Father are one. And he is Co-equal with the Father: He thought it no robery to be equal with God, Phil. 2.6, Being the brightness of his Fathers Glory, and the express Image of his Person, Heb. 1.3. Therefore he is infinitely

precious in his Person.

Secondly, As he is precious in his Person, so is he precious in his Titles: those rich and glorious Titles that are attributed to him. For Example, Ifa. 9. 6, This is the name wherewith the Lord Fefus Christ is called, Wonderful Counsellour; El, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Pray mark with what a glorious Title he is called there, The Mighty God; How dare then any blasphemous Arrian, or Atheist, deny the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, deny that he is God; when this is one of the Titles wherewith he is called, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace? What glorious Titles are here? So you shall read he is called his Fathers delight, Isa. 42. 1, Behold my servant whom I uphold,

hold, mine Elect in whom my ful delighteth .-And the Fathers bosom-friend, John 1. 18, No man hath feen God at any time, fave the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. If the love of all the Parents in the World were concentred in one, it were but as a drop of that infinite Ocean of Love, that is between the Father and the Son :- Nay more, he is called the Fathers Fellow, Zech. 13. 7, Awake O Sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my Fellow, faith the Lord of Hofts. So likewise he is called The Head of the Church, Eph. 5: 23: and the Judg both of quick and dead, Acts 10. 42. In a word, fuch is the Dignity of his Perfon: fuch is the Excellency of his Merits: fuch is the sweetness of his Graces; such is the fulness of his Perfection, that the Scripture does abundantly put those terms of honour upon the Lord Christ; as fometimes comparing him to a Corner-stone, because he does support us, Ephes. 2.20. Sometimes to A Vine, because he does refresh us, John 15. 1. Sometimes unto a Physician, because he does heal us, Matth. o. 12. Sometimes to a Daystar, because he does enlighten us, Rev. 22. 16. Sometimes to A Shepherd, because he does lead us, John 10. Sometimes to Manna, or the Bread of life, because he does feed us; What glorious Titles are these that are given to Christ? therefore he is precious in his Titles.

Thirdly, As he is precious in his Titles, so he is precious in his Offices; in his Kingly Office, in his Priestly Office, and in his Prophetical Office.

First, He is precious in his Kingly Cffice, he callshimself The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, Rev. 19. 16, The King of Kings: He is such a King

the

King that conquers the enemies of our Salvation: as Sin, and Satan, and Death, and Hell, and the World; other Kings Rule over us, but this King can only Rule in us: My Kingdom is not of this world, faith he; The Kingdom of God is within you, Lnke 17. 21. This King can make Laws that can bind the Conscience; he is such a King as hath all Power in Heaven and Earth committed to him, Matth. 28. 18.

Again, He is such a Priest as hath reconciled us to God the Father, and ever lives to make intercession for us, who is touched with the feeling of our instruities, Col. 1. 21. Heb. 7. 25. Heb. 4. 15. And he is such a Prophet, as can persectly instruct his Church; others may preach to the ear, but he hath his Pulpit in Heaven only, that can preach to the heart; other Preachers can open the Scriptures, but it is Jesus Christ only that can open our understandings, that we may understand the Scriptures, Luke 24. 45, Then opened he their underderstandings, that they might understand the Scriptures. O what glorious Offices are these?

Fourthly, He is precious in his Ordinances: For Example, His Word is exceeding precious to all those that have tasted the sweetness of it; how precious was it to David, Psalm 119. 72, The Law of thy Mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. How precious are Sabbaths to those that know how much of Heaven is wrapt up in the Sabbath! Certainly, these Sabbath-days are Market-days for our Souls, wherein we may make provision for Eternity; days wherein the Lord Jesus Christ many times communicates himself, and much of his sweetness to those that wait upon him in holy Duties. And how precious is

the Ordinance of the Lords Supper! wherein the Lord Christ makes us a feast of fat things, a feast of Wines on the Lees, of fat things, full of Marrow, Wines on the Lees well refined, 1sa. 25. Wherein he gives his own slesh to eat, his slesh that was crucified to satisfie Divine Justice; and his own blood to drink, that blood which only can quench the fire of Hell, quench the fire of Gods anger, which otherwise would have been burning, and

burning against us to all Eternity.

Fifthly, As he is precious in his Ordinances, fo he is precious in his Prerogatives; for he, and he only is the Saviour of the World, and besides him there was no other Saviour, Alts 4. 12, Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none o. ther Name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved: That is, there is nothing can be named, for it is but a Hebraism; there is nothing can be named under Heaven whereby we can be faved, but only the Name of Jesus Christ; he had no Coadjutor, or Helper in the work of our Redemption, Ifa. 63. 3, I have trodden the Wine. press alone, and of the People there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my rayment. And as he is the only Saviour, fo he is the only Mediator too; For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. 2.5. So he is the only Head of his Church, Eph. 1. 22, And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church. He only hath the Supremacy and Authority, as being Omnipotent, and Omnipresent, one that is able to protect his people

ple from all injuries, one that is able to prevent all the plots and projects that are hatcht and invented against them: he hath these Prerogatives that cannot be given to any Creature in Heaven or Earth, but only unto him; therefore he is pre-

cious in his Prerogatives.

n

15

n

h

d,

0

e

n

7

7.

n

n

Sixthly, The Lord Christ is precious also in the purchase of his blood: the purchase he made for us by his blood, is a very precious purchase; and the portion that he bestows on his Elect, that he hath purchased for them, is a precious portion; so he is precious, not only in regard of his Person, but in regard of his Portion. For Example, the Redemption that he hath wrought for us by his blood, is a precious Redemption; a Redemption from Sin, and Satan, and Death, and Hell; In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, Ephes. 1.7.

Secondly, The donation or bestowing of his Spirit; it is a very precious gift, that the Spirit of God should in his Name, that is for his Merit, be bestowed upon all those that do believe: But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Wame, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance what soever I have said unto you, John 14. 26. O what a precious, invaluable gift is it, to have the Spirit of God given us, to quicken us, to draw us to Jesus Christ, and to carry on the work of Grace

in us!

Thirdly, The Graces of the Spirit, which likewife are purchased by him, are precious Graces: Faith is a precious Grace, as it is called, 2 Pet. 1. 2, Simon Peter, a Servant, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious Faith

T 4

with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; that the tryal of your Faith' being much more precious than of gold that perisheth. The tryal of Gold is the worst thing that belongs to Gold: and the tryal of Faith is the worft thing that belongs to Faith: yet faith the Apostle, The tryal of your Faith is much more precious than that of Gold, 1 Pet. 1. 7. So Repentance, that is a precious Grace, because it is hepentance unto life, as the Apostle calls it, Acts 11. 18, When they heard thefe things, they held their peace, and glorified God, Saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto life. - And Hope, that is a stedfast Grace, it is the Anchor of the Soul. And Love, that is a lovely Grace; it brings the Soul into nearer Communion with God .--Then Wisdom, that is a precious Grace, a shining Grace: A mans wisdom maketh his face to shine, fith Solomon, Ecclef. 8. 1. And Job speaking of Wildom, faith he, Job 28. 12, 13, But where shall Wildom be found, and where is the place of Under standing? Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the Land of the Living; it is of more price than Rubies: it is of an invaluable price. And Humility, that is an honourable Grace. And Fear, that is a preferving Grace. And Patience, that is a supporting Grace. Perseverance, that is a Crowning Grace. All thefe Graces are precious Graces, and they are all of them bestowed upon us, meetly upon the account of Christs merits.

Fourthly, The Priviledges that we have by Jesus Christ, they are precious Priviledges: U-union with him, and Communion in his Life and Death, and Resurrection, and Comforts: access

to God the Father, and that with boldness.

Fifthly, The Promises that are sealed by his blood, they are precious Promises: promises for this life, and promises for the life to come; that Promise, That all shall work together fer good to them that love God; a big-bellied promise, as I may so say. All things work together for good: and our

prayers and our persons shall be accepted.

th

b.

gs

g

be

at

es

e,

1e

g

e,

of

re

of

it

e

d

Lastly, The Inheritance that he hath purchased for us, is a precious Inheritance; An incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven. In brief, Such is the preciousness of the Lord Jefus Christ, that compare him with the most precious things that can be named, and you shall see they are but vile and base in comparison of him: For Example, 1. The Souls of men and women, they are faid to be precious; but Oh, how infinitely precious is Tesus Christ, whose blood is a valuable and equivalent price for the Souls of all the men and women in the world. 2. Light is faid to be precious; Christ said of himself, I am the light of the world, John 8. 12. Light is precious to those that are in a Dungeon of darknels: Now, fays Jesus Christ, I am the light of the world. ______ 3. Truth is precious, so precious that we are to buy it at any rate, and fell it at no rate; Jesus Christ says of himself, I am the Truth, John 14.6. ______4. Fountains and Springs of water are precious in hot and dry Countreys: Oh the Lord Jesus Christ, he is the Well of Salvation, 1sa. 12.3, Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the Wells of Salvation. ______ 5. Bread is precious to those that are ready to perish: a man will venture the getting of bread with the hazard of his life, Lam. 5. 9, We get our bread with

with the peril of our lives. Now Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life, John 6. 48.—6. Balm and Balsom is precious. His blood is the only Balm that can cure wounded Souls: so precious is the Lord Jesus Christ, that all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, are but a picture of that beauty and preciousness that is in him; he is the Abstract and Epitome of all perfections: how precious must he needs be, to whom all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth do contribute all their Excellencies, to make him excellent and glorious! Thus you see the Point opened. Now for the Uses of it.

First, By way of Information. Is the Lord Tesus Christ so infinitely precious? you may see then, why the Souls of men and women are fo precious, because they are purchased by a precious Saviour, purchased by his precious blood. Hearken O fons of men! why are you tumbling up and down in dirt and clay? why do you not raise your hearts and thoughts higher and higher, seeing that you have such precious Souls, that are capable of a precious Inheritance? why do you not look after a precious Covenant of Grace, fealed to you, and precious Promises confirmed to you by the blood of Ghrist? why do you not look after that precious Pearl, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is worth more than ten thousand worlds? Oh the baseness of the heart of man, that should prefer dirt, and drofs, and dung, before him who is fo infinitely precious; that they should so undervalue their precious Souls, that cost such an invaluable rate for their Redemption.

Secondly, By way of Information; fee the horrible greatness of the sin of Unbelief, that makes the Sinner undervalue this precious Redeemer.

Says Jesus Christ, Tou will not come to me, that you might have life, John 5. 40. Oh bewail your Unbelief, that keeps Christ and your Souls, a precious Christ and your poor Souls at such a distance.

Thirdly, By way of Information; take notice what a bleffed condition they are in, that have gotten the Lord Jesus Christ into their Souls! If the Lord bestows this gift of all gifts, this precious Christ upon you, Oh it is more than if he had given thee the World: nay, then if he had given thee ten thousand Worlds for thy portion; O rejoyce in thy portion; for as soon as ever thou art a Believer, thy heart is made a Cabinet for this precious Pearl, the Lord Christ; for, He dwells in our hearts by faith, Ephes. 3. 17. Oh, manifest to the World the brightness of this Pearl; let some lustre of Jesus Christ shine in thy Conversation, shine through this Cabinet, as Light shines through a Lanthorn.

The second Use is by way of Exhortation: And here I must but name some sew particulars, answerable to the Explication of the Doctrine I insisted on more largely; and there are several Duties I would briefly commend to you, and the Lord give you hearts, and me a heart, and every one a heart to close with this precious Truth tendred to you, in reference to this precious Redeemer.

First, If Jesus Christ be so precious in his perfon, as being God and Man: then learn to honour him, admire and adore him; for, This is the will of God the Father, that all should honour Jesus Christ, even as thy honour the Father. See it expressy commanded, in John 5.23, That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father:

He that bonoureth not the Son, bonoureth not the Father which hath fent him. Why should they homour the Son, as they honour the Father? because he is fo precious in his person, being God and Man united together in one person: therefore see that vou honour him; therefore kiss the Son with a kifs of Reverence, of Love, and of Obidience, left

his anger be kindled against you.

Secondly, Is the Lord Jesus Christ so precious in his Titles, as being the Delight of the Father, the Fathers Fellow, the Judg of the World, the Judg of quick and dead; O then, never give reft to your eyes, nor flumber to your eye lids: never rest satisfied with any condition, with any portion, with any parts, priviledges whatfoever here below, till you have got an interest in him that is every way so precious; get him and get all, want him and want all. A man that catches at the shadow, you know loses the substance; but get the fubstance, and you get the shadow with it. So long as you look after other things besides Christ, you lose him; but if you get him, you get the shadow of all: you get life, and peace, and comfort, and all that your hearts can defire; be content to lose all to get him, who when you have got, you shall be fure never to lofe.

Thirdly, Is Jefus Christ so precious in his Offices, as King, Prieft, and Prophet? then do you labour to be experimentally partakers of all those Offices, that you also may be Kings: And hath made us to be Kings and Priests to God and his Father, Rev. 1, 6. Labour to be Kings, in Ruling over your own lus, over your own distempers, and passions: as he said excellently. Do but conquer thy self, and the world is conquered to thy hand. A .

greater

greater victory it is for a man to conquer himself, than to conquer a Kingdom. Labour in this fenfe to be Kings, that your iniquities may not have dominion over you, but that you may at length get victory over your lufts, which fight against your Souls. Again, labour to be spiritual Priests, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices to God, acceptable through Jefus Christ; and do you labour to be Prophets: that is, endued with fuch wisdom, and fpiritual knowledg, that you may be able to admonish, and instruct one another. This is that which the Apostle speaks of, to the great commendation of the Romans, in Rom. 15. 14, And I my self also am perswaded of you my Brethren, that ye also are full of goodness: filled with all knowledg, able to admonish one another. Do you, my Brethren, labour to be like Jefus Chrift, in all his Offices.

Fourthly, Is Jesus Christ fo precious in his Ordinances? O then, do you labour to taste the fweetness of every Ordinance; taste the sweetness of the Word of God, that you may fay, How sweet is thy Word to my taste! yea, sweeter than Honey to my mouth, Pfalm 119. 103. Tafte the fweetness of Jesus Christ in the precious Ordinance of the Lords Supper: that you may fay, I fate down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was (weet to my tafte, Cant. 2. 3. And in Cant. 5. ult. His mouth is most sweet; His mouth is sweetnesses, as the Hebrew phrase carries it; and he is altogether lovely: He is most sweet in his Ordinances; O fay, one hours Communion with him, is better than all the pleasures of the World: one tafte of that spiced Wine, and of the juice of the Pomgranate, spoken of in Cant. 8. 2, I would

lead thee, and bring thee into my mothers honse, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced Wine, of the juice of my Pomgranate. One draught of that generous Wine, that spiced Wine, how pleasant and delightful would it be to my Soul! Is Jesus Christ so sweet in his Ordinances: Oh then labour to taste the sweetness of Jesus Christ in his Ordinances.

Fifthly, Is Jesus Christ so precious in his Prerogatives: he is the only Saviour, the only Mediator: then subject your selves to him, and to none
but him; be subject to him as your only Prince and
Saviour: and say, O Lord our God, other Lords
besides thee have had Dominion over us; but by thee
only will we make mention of thy Name, Isa. 26. 13.

Lastly, Is the Lord Jesus Christ so exceeding precious in the purchase of his blood? then do you labour to have an interest in his purchase; what is it for you to hear of the purchase of Christs blood, if this purchase be not yours, if you have not a share and part in it? What is Christ, if he be not my Christ? What is his purchase, if it be not my purchase? For Example, Is he hath purchased an Eternal Redemption by his own blood: O do you labour every day to get an affurance that you are in the number of his Redeemed ones.

But how may we know that?

I answer, If you be the Redeemed of Jesus Christ, then you will walk in the way of the Redeemed of Christ: and that way is called Holy, Isa. 35.8, And an high-way shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those; the way faring men, though fools, shall not err therein. Hath he purchased, not only Redemption, but

the Donation of his Spirit? Oh, do you beg the Spirit of God: that, that Gift, that great Gift, may be bestowed on you, according to that Promise (a Text I opened to you in many Sermons) And I will put my Spirit within you, and canse you to walk in my Statutes: and ye shall keep my Judgments and do them; Ezek. 36. 27, If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. 8.9. And do you put the Lord in mind of all those gracious Promises that he hath made: I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine off-spring, Isa. 44. 3.

Again, Hath he purchased such precious Graces to be bestowed upon all his Children, upon all those that have an interest in him? O then, do you labour to be truly gracious: not only to have restraining grace, but renewing grace; not only common grace, but sanctifying grace, sound faith, sincere love, unseigned obedience, that you may have the graces of Humility, meekness, patience, that you may have the Image of Jesus Christ stamped upon your Souls, that you may receive of his fulness, grace for grace: that you may in every grace of Christ have a part, that by his Wissom you may be made wise; by his Holiness, we may be made holy.

Again, Hath he purchased likewise such precious Priviledges for his Children? O then, do you labour to be made partakers of those precious Priviledges, to be united to Christ, and to have Communion with him, in his life: and because he lives, you may live also; I mean, the life of Grace, and life more abundantly: and communion in his Death, because he died for fin, you may die to sin;

and

and communion in his Refurrection, because he rose from the Grave, you may rise to holiness and newness of life: And the like

Again, Hath he purchased such precious Promises, and all those Promises are sealed in his blood, 2 Cor. 1. 20, For all the promises of God are in him, Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. O then, do you labour to be made partakers of those Promises, that you may know that you are Heirs of those Promises, that you may look upon them as Legacies, bequeathed to you by your dear Lord and Master; by your Husband Jesus Christ,

who left these Legacies to you.

Lastly, Hath he purchased a precious Inheritance, that is incorruptible and undefiled? then I befeech you in the fear of Almighty God, that you take heed that it fares not with you, as it did with that unbelieving Prince, that faw the plenty in Samaria, but did not taste of it, but died for all that; fo you to hear of a glorious Inheritance, but to come short of it, and so be undone to all Erernity, according to my Afternoon Text: Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entring into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it, Heb. 4. 1. Oh, hath he purchased this Inheritance? and do not you long to be with him, where you shall sin no more, nor forrow no more? Thus you fee what use may be made of the preciousnels of Jesus Christin all these respects: as he is precious in his Person, in his Titles, in his Offices, in his Kingly, Prieftly, and Prophetical Offices, in his Ordinances, in his Prerogatives, in the purchases of his Blood: those precious Priviledges and Inheritance he hath purchased for us. The Lord' help us feriously to think on these things, and to

meditate upon them, and to lay them up in our hearts, as Cordials against a day wherein we may stand in need of them. And lo I have done with the first Point of Doctrine , That Jesus Christ is infinitely precious in himself. The other Doctrine is, That the Lord Jesus Christ is exceeding precious to all Believers, and is highly prized by them.



i Pet. II. 7.

Unto you therefore which believe, he is precions.

Made entrance into this Text the last time that we had this folern occasion of drawing near to God, in the use of this precious Ordinance of the Lords Suppers I shewed you the Coherence, Sense; and scope of the words: and there were two Points of Doctrine that I drew from them. The first was this:

That Jesus Christ is infinitely precious in himfelf.

I now come to the fecond Doctrine drawn from these words: and that is this, we will be

As Jefus Christ is precious in himfett info is he exceeding precious to all Believers, and highly prized by them. IT was a brahmar & act of Will resided and for

betreen among ten thur and, as the Hebt ety was

For the proof, or fetling of this Point, before I come to open it to you, I shall give you but two Testimonies for the Confirmation of it: the one out of the Old Testament, the other out of the New; that out of the Old Testament, is in Cant. 5. 9, 10: where you shall read, the strangers enquiring of the Spouse, that is the Church of Christ, faying, What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, Othou fairest among women? What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, that thou dost fo charge us? The Church makes this answer, My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand, &c. My Beloved is white and ruddy; Jesus Christ he is white in respect of his Divine Nature; Being the brightness of his Fathers Glory, and the express Image of his Person, Heb. 1.3. And yet he is red in his Humane Nature, being of the same substance with the first Adam, that was made of red Earth; He was white in his Holiness, but yet he is redalfo in that bloody passion, which he was contented to undertake for our fakes: he was white un his unspotted Innocency, but yet he is red withal by the imputation of our fins, which are faid to be Crimfon and Scarlet fins , Ifa. 1.18, Come now and let us reason together, faith the Lord; though your fins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Spour, though they be red like Crimfon, they Shall be as Wool. Thus Jefus Christ is white and ruddy : Liber fays the Church withal, He is the chief. of among ten thousand on he is the Standardbearer among ten thousand, as the Hebrew word may be interpreted, the Standard-bearer; he is higher than the Kings of the Earth, therefore called the Standard-bearer, Pfalm 89. 27. Alfo, 1 will make my first-born higher than the Kings of the Earth.

e

e

d

e

e

It

e

e

1.

26

8

d

is

he

Earth. He guides and leads his people, as being the Captain of their Salvation; he leads them as a Standard-bearer leads an Army by his Colours. Oh what a high price and value did the Church fet upon Jesus Christ here; He is white and ruddy, the choicest among ten thousand: Christ was very precious you'dee in her eyes. The other testimony which I shall give you, is in the New Testament. Phil. 3.8, Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledg of Christ Jesusmy Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. I count all things but loss; whatever I esteemed gain before, all my outward Priviledges that I stood upon before, I count them but as loss: but that is not all, I count oll things, fays he, dung, dross and dung: or as the Greek phrase there sigfignifies, oxubana, fuch things as we cast out to Dogs: I account them but as scrapings, as skins, as parings, as nothing worth, in comparison of the Lord Jefus Christ. If there had been presented to Paul a whole Mountain of Gold and Silver, and precious Pearls, in compatison of Jesus Christ, it would have been but as a heap of dung to him: I count all things (fays he) but loss and dung, in comparison of Christ. Consider but what things they were that he did undervalue, in comparison of Christ, and consider who did undervalue them. Consider what it was that Paul did undervalue, all the Priviledges that he had: for example, He tells you in the 5th and 6th verses, Circumcifed the eighth day (so outwardly in covenant with God, bearing the Covenant of God in his flesh: this was nothing in his esteem) of the stock of Israel, of the Tribe of Benjamin, an Hobren of the Hebrews

brews: Of the Stock of Abraham; this was his Birth-priviledg, but this was nothing: He was a man of Parts and Learning, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; but all his natural parts, abilities and endowments, all these he esteemed nothing: yea, he was a man of a civil and unblameable convertation; touching the righteou [ne s which is in the Law, blameless. As to his outward man, he was blameless, none could say that black was his eye: yet all these Priviledges he esteemed loss and dung, in comparison of Jesus Christ .-And then consider, who it was that did undervalue them; it was Paul, a Scholar, a man of Parts, a man of no mean City, but of the City of Tarfus in Cilicia, Acts 21. 39. It was Paul, that was not a Novice in Religion, that knew not what he faid; but Paul the Aged, that was well experienced in fuch things, that knew very well what he faid; it is he that passes this account of all things, in comparison of Jesus Christ; I, fays he, esteem all these Priviledges: and if I had a thousand times as many more, I would esteem them but loss, and drofs, and dung, as nothing in comparison of Christ. Oh, how invaluable was Jesus Christ to holy Paul, that was a Believer!

But for the better understanding of this Point, that we may fee how excellent and precious Christ is to a Believer, how highly he is prized by

First, It may be demanded, Who are those Believers to whom Christ is precious?

Secondly, Why is Christ fo precious to them? First, Who are those Believers to whom Christ is precious?

I answer, Not they that have only an Histori-LYEN.

cal Faith of Christ, to know that there was fuch a Saviour that came into the World, and that he was God and Man; and that he is able to fave to the uttermost those that come to him. Nor they that have only a temporary Faith: fuch a Faith as they had, which you read of in the Parable of the Sower, Matth. 13, They that received the feed into stony places, the same are they which hear the Word, and anon with joy receive it; but they have no root; and for a while believe, but in time of temptation and persecution, they fall away, Luke 8. 13. Not they, I fay, that thus have only an historical Faith, or only a temporary Faith; but they are faid to be Believers, that are contented to take Jesus Christ upon his own terms: to receive him as their King, and Priest, and Prophet: they that can be content. to close with him, and to cleave to him, as to the work of their Salvation, and that can fay with Job, Though thou kill me, I will put my trust in thee, Job 1 2. 15. In a word, They are faid to be Believers, that can rest and rely upon Jesus Christ; that can cast their Souls into his Arms, to fink or fwim with him, to live or die with him, to be faved or damned with him; it is the true Believer the Text here speaks of: when the Apostle says here, To you that believe he is precious; you must not understand it of a formal believer, neither must you understand it of a hypocritical believer: you must not understand it of those that have a false Faith, but of those that have a true Faith. I told you not long ago, which some of you may re nember, out of that Text, Heb. 10. 22, Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of Faith; That there was a falle and counterfeit Faith, as well as a true Faith; for example, I told you, Firit,

First, That that is an easie Faith that is easily let into the Soul, without any work of conviction, contrition, and humiliation. That Faith that hath no tears, nor prayers, nor earnest endeavours paid for the purchase of it, is cheap ware: and not worth a farthing.

Secondly, That Faith that is an idle, and an ineffectual Faith, that is never working upon the precepts of God, to obey them: nor on the Promifes of God, to embrace them: nor on the Threat-

nings of God, to tremble at them.

Thirdly, That Faith that is an unthriving Faith, that never grows under the means of Grace. True Faith is a growing Faith, 2 The st. 1. 3, says the Apostle, We are bound to thank God always for you, Brethren, as it is meet: because that your Faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth.

Fourthly, That Faith that is a loofe and licentious Faith, that Faith that hath room for Christ, and room for any reigning buft also: room for Christ, and room for the World, and the things of it: when a man can pretend love to Jesus Christ, and yet live in a known fin: whereas the true Faith purifies the heart, Atts 15. 9, And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. To them that have fuch a Faith, this falle counterfeit Faith, this easie, idle, unthriving, loofe and licentious Faith, to them Christ is not at all precious, they fee no beauty at all in him! But they that have this true Faith, that is ushered in by conviction and humiliation, that is a growing Faith, an operative and working Faith; this holy Faith, as it is called in the 26 verse of the Epistle of Saint Jude; But ye, Beloved, building up

your selves in your most boly faith, praying in the Holy Ghost; To them that have this true Faith, to them Jesus Christ is precious, and they are the Believers the Text here speaks of. So much of the first, who are those Believers to whom Jesus Christ is precious?

Secondly, Why is Jesus Christ so precious to such Believers? You see who they are: but why is he so precious to them, so highly prized by them? Divers reasons might be rendered: I shall

give you these five or or fix.

First, Jesus Christ is so highly prized by Belie. vers, because they see the indispensable need that they have of him: that without him they are loft, dead, damned, and undone for ever; therefore they prize him, because they know they cannot live without him; They know that a condemned Prifoner hath not more need of a pardon: a poor beggar that is ready to starve in the streets hath not more need of food: nor a naked man more need of cloaths: nor a fick man, more need of a Physitian, than they have of Jesus Christ; and therefote they prize him. They know they are foolish, yea, folly it felf, therefore they have need of him to be their wisdom to guide them: they know they are guilty Sinners, therefore they know they have need of his Righteousness to clear them; they know they are poluted and defiled Sinners, therefore they have need of his blood to purifie them; they know they are exposed to the wrath of a Sin-revenging God, and the curse of the condemning Law, and the condemnation of the fecond Death, therefore they have need of him to be their Redemption; They know that they are infinitely indebted, that they owe to God a debt of

ten thousand Talents, which they are never able to discharge, and therefore they have need of Christ to be their Surety; they know they are weak, and able to do nothing without him; (without me, fays Christ, ye can do nothing), and they know Christ is their strength, as well as Redeemer, and that through Christ they can do all things, Phil. 4. 13, I can do all things through Christ that streng. theneth me. In a word, They know that Jelus Christ is their Rock, their Refuge, their R. deemer, their Peace, their Portion, their All, and therefore they see the infinite need they have of him, and that without him they are nothing: they can do nothing, they are worse than no thing, therefore they prize him. Here is one Reason why Jesus Christ is so precious to true Believers, because they fee the infinite need they have of him.

Secondly, Jesus Christ is thus precious to true Believers, because they see an invaluable and unconceivable beauty in him. It is true indeed, to Unbelievers, Jesus Christ hath no beauty in him that they should desire him; as it is Ifa. 53. 2, For be shall grow up before him as a tender Plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see bim, there is no beauty, that we should desire bim. A carnal earthly minded man, he fays concerning Christ, as they did in the place before named, Cant. 5. 9, What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved? What is there of so much beauty in Christ, that we should either eye him, observe him, prize him, or feek him, or look after him? Acts 4. 11, This is the Stone which was fet at nought by you builders. Jefus Christ is as a thing of nothing in an Unbelievers

S

eve: fuch a one makes no more reckoning of him (with reverence be it spoten) than the dirt under foot: Whereas Faith, you must know, hath an Eagles eye, it can fee things afar off, it fees a great deal of beauty in the Lord Jesus Christ; though in respect of any of these outward accommodations, there is no beauty at all in him; yet difcerning things with a Spiritual eye, a Believer fees Christ afar off, as it is faid of Abraham, John 8. 56, Your Father Abraham rejoyced to see my day, and he save it, and was glad. There was an eye of Faith in Abraham; He saw my day, and rejoyced. Hence it is, that believing in Christ is sometimes expressed by this Phrase of seeing Christ, Act. 22.14, Anarias speaking to Paul, faid, The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that just one, and shouldst bear the voice of his See him, that is, that thou shouldst believe in him. Faith therefore sees Christ; fees him afar off, fees him, though cloathed with our flesh, with our infirmities. Faith looks upon Jesus Christ, and does fee him evidently crucified, as the Apostle speaks, Gal. 3. 1, O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the Truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently fee forth crucified among you? Nay, Faith lees a great deal of beauty in his fufferings, how much more in his glory! for Example, Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, Heb. 11.26. Why? for he had respect unto the recompence of reward; he had the quickfighted eye of Faith. You read in Mark 2, when the Wife men came from the East to Ferusalem, to enquire after him that was born King of the Jews, that is, after Jesus Christ; when they came to enquire

quire of him, they first came to Jerusalem; and they faw Herod (it may be) arrayed in all his glorious Robes: but we do not read, that they fell down and worshipped Herod; then they came to Bethlebem, where they faw the Babe Tefus wrapt in Swadling-cloaths, in a poor Garb(it may be little better than rags) yet they fall down and worship Now, what is the reason that they did not worship a magnificent glorious Herod, in all his Robes, but they worship a poor contemptible Babe in Swadling-cloaths? furely this was, because they had a spiritual eye of Faith, they looked on Christ with an eye of Faith, therefore in his Infancy they faw greatness; in his meanness they saw Majesty; and more Glory in Christ in his Rags, than in Herod in his Robes.

Thirdly, Christ is thus precious to true Believers, because they do not only see the need they have of him, and a great deal of beauty in him: but they do receive very rich and invaluable bene-

fits by him for the present.

First, They receive many temporal mercies by him: all their temporal comforts come streaming to them in the blood of Jesus Christ. Christ is the Heir of all things, and all things are Believers by Christ; All things are yours, says the Apostle, for as you are Christs, 1 Cor. 3.22.

Secondly, As they receive temporal mercies, for they receive many spiritual Priviledges, Graces, and comforts by him: They receive spiritual Priviledges, as Justification, Sanctification, and Adoption.

First, Justiff ation. Oh what a Priviledg is this, that through Jesus Christ God should look upon Believers, not as Sinners, but as Saints! for God to say of them, Thou art all fair my Beloved, there

is no fpot in thee; in respect of Justification there is no spot in thee, though their Sanctification be impertect, Cant. 4. 7. Believers have the blood of Jefus Christ to take away all their guilt: not only the guilt contracted in their unregenerate estate, but the guilt contracted in the estate of grace. Alas, fays a Believer, when I have done a Duty, used a comfort, filled my Relations in the best manner I can, what would become of me if I had not a Saviour, a Mediator, to take away the iniquity of my holy Offerings? But now, this is a priviledg better worth than the Gold of Ophir, nay better worth than the whole World; namely, by Tefus Christ, and believing in him, We are justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the Law of Moses, Act. 13. 39.

Secondly, And as they receive the priviled of Tustification, so Believers receive the priviledg of Sanctification by him; for Christ is not only made to us Wisdom by his Word, and Righteousness by his Merit, but Sanctification also by his Spirit, 1 Cor. 1. 30. Christ is made not only a pattern of holiness to us, but the principle of holiness; Believers are strong in his Strength, and wife by his Wisdom, and holy by his Holiness, and meek by his Meekness; they have the Image of Jesus Christ stampt upon their Souls: they know him in some measure, in the power of his death, killing and crucifying the old man, together with the affections and lufts thereof: they know him in the power of his Refurrection, raising them up to a holy and Heavenly Conversation. Thus I say, they receive the priviledg of Sanctification by Telus Christ.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, And then they receive the Priviledg of Adoption too; as he is the Natural Son of God, Believers being united to him, they are partakers of his Son-ship, they are made the Sons and Daughters of God by Adoption: And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty, 2 Cor. 6. ult.

Secondly, And fo Believers receive spiritual. grace from him. Look as the Oyl that was poured upon Aarons head, run down to the skirts of his cloathing; so from that fulness of Grace which is in Jesus Christ, Believers receive, and grace for grace: a continual supply of grace from him, he is the Author of all their graces, he is the Author of their Faith; he is called The Author and Finisher of their Faith, Heb. 12. 2. He is the Author of their Love; Christ first warms their hearts with a fense of his Love, before they can love him; We love him, because he first loved us, 1 John 4. 19. He is the Author of their Repentance: God bath exalted him to be a Prince, and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins to his people, Acts 5. 31.

Thirdly, And then they receive spiritual comforts by him too; My peace I give unto you, my peace I leave with you: not as the world giveth, give I unto yon; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid, John 14.27. He gives Believers that peace that the World can neither give, nor take away from them; that peace and comfort, that can hold up their heads in all outward storms: In the world (says he) you shall have tribulation, but in me you shall have peace, John 16. ult. At the same time, when they have tribulation in the world, they may have peace in Christ; at the same time

when

when there is ratling upon the Tiles, there may be Musick in the Chamber; outward tribulations, and inward consolations, they may stand together at the very same time: In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul, Psalm 94.

19. So, though there may be multitude of troubles within, yet there may be comforts to resresh the Soul. This is the third Reason, why Jesus Christ is so precious to Believers, Because they have much in hand from Christ: they have Temporal Mercies, and Spiritual Mercies, Spiritual Priviledges, Justification, Sanctification, and Adoption; and Spiritual Graces, and Spiritual Comforts.

Real. 4. Jesus Christ is very precious to Believers, because they expect much from him. As they have much in hand by him, fo they have more in hope from him; they have much for the present. but more for the future; for, what do they expect from him but an Inheritance incorrupted, undefiled, referved in Heaven for them: an everlasting Kingdom, a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, everlafting Communion with himfelf, bosom-Communion with himself in Glory; to have their Souls bathed in those Rivers of pleasure that are at his right hand for evermore: yea, the following the Lamb wherefoever he goes, to be triumphing in his Praifes, to be founding forth those Hallelujahs to him that fits upon the Throne for ever, to live and lie in his continual embraces: Eye hath not feen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath laid up for them that love him. Now, because with the eye of Faith they look upon these things, and they fully expect to enjoy them: therefore hence it is they do fo highly prize Jefus Chrift.

Reaf. s. Jefus Christ is very precious to Belies vers: they do most highly prize him, Because Faith you must know, is a uniting grace; an espousing grace; it is the Wedding-Ring. as I have sometimes told you, that makes up the Match between Jefus Christ and the poor Soul: as soon as ever a man comes to be a Believer, to take Jesus Christ to be his Head, his Husband, his Portion, then is the Match made up between them; Christ dwells in our bearts by Faith, Ephel. 3. 17. Now then, Believers being thus espoused to him, thus united to him, they cannot but dearly love him. As a Wife that bath pitcht her affections upon a Husband, and forfaken all others: and hath vowed to cleave to him, and him only, while they both shall live, therefore the does prize him above all the men in the World: so when the Soul is once united to Christ, marryed to him (Thy Maker is thy Husband); when the Soul is espoused to Christ, it cannot but dearly love him, and forfake all others in comparison of him.

Real. 6. Jesus Christ is very precious to Believers, Because true Faith ever works by Love, Gal. 5. 6, For in Christ Jesus, neither Circumciston availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcission, but Faith which worketh by Love. True Faith will make a man dearly love the Lord Jesus Christ; now, if we love him, we cannot but prize him whom we

love so dearly.

The Use Ishall make of this Point briefly:

First, For Examination. And, O that you and I could engage our own hearts a while, and call our selves to account in sad and serious thoughts, whether Jesus Christ be precious to us, year or no; Is he highly prized by you, even by you that hear

me

me this day? Can you fay with the Church, My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest of tenthoufand? And with St. Paul, I esteem all things but dross and dung, in comparison of Jesus Christ; the whole World, the glory, the beauty, and treafures, and pleafures of it, but as a heap of dung, in comparison of him? this pitch and frame you must come unto, or else you can never have any affurance that Christ is yours, and that you are his; for, as our Saviour faith in the like cafe, He that boveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me, &c. Matth. 10. 37. So here, if any thing be more prized than Jesus Christ, you can have no affurance that Christ is your portion; if any thing be preferred before him, or prized more highly than he: is there not great need then, that you should enquire whether Jesus Christ be precious to you, yea or no? That I may press you to this enquiry, confider but this one Motive: this is one of the furest Characters to distinguish between a sincere-hearted Christian, and an Hypocrite: For, he that is fincere, and upright-hearted, does lay Jefus Christ the nearest to his heart, and fays, None but Christ, nothing but Christ; whereas ever observe it, and you shall see a Hypocrite hath always something that lies nearer to his heart than Tefus Christ does; however he may shew much love to Christ with his mouth, yet his heart goes after his coverousness, or after some base lust or other; as God told the Prophet, Ezek 33. 31, And they come unto thee as my People, and they fit before thee as my People, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they hew much love, but their heart goeth after their coveredfiefs. So that Jefus Christ hath not the heart of a Hypocrite;

pocrite; he may have the mouth of a Hypocrite; a snew of love; but there is fomething still that doth lie nearer his heart than Christ does. Look into the parable of the Sower; and you will find that Seed that was fown in the stony-ground, it forung up and made a fair shew for a while, but there was fomething that lay between the feed and the Soil; fo there is fomething that lies between Jesus Christ and the Soul of a Hypocrite. You know the story of the young man in Matth. 19.22. When Jefus Christ made him a fair proffer, Go and fell that thou hast (fays he) and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven, and come and follow me. He made a fair shew, but the world lay nearer his heart than Jesus Christ did; therefore, when he bid them fell all, and give to the poor: he went away very forrowful. And you know the story of Orpah and Ruth, Ruth 1: Orpah, She gave her Mother in-Law a kiss, and bid her Farewel, but Ruth clave to her Mother Naomi. So it is here, It may be an Hypocrite can complement with the Lord Jefus Christ, can give him some outward Ceremonial observance; but, when it comes to this, that he must part with any thing for Christ; when Christ tells him, If thou wilt be mine, thou must take me on my own terms: thou must look to bear my Cross, as well as to wear my Crown; thou must look for Hatred, Persecution, a Cross, a Prifon for my take, then he begins to shrink and draw back; I love Jefus Chrift well, fays he, but I love pleasures better, the World better, Liberty better ; fill there is fomething that a Hypocrite prizes be fore Jefus Chrift.

But then you will say, How may I do to know that Jesus Christ is precious to me indeed? I will tell you briefly:

First,

fe

de

m

First, See whether your desires be strongly carried out after the Lord Jefus Christ; whether they be vehement, constant, and industrious defires, or no; for, if your defires afren Jesus Christ be right, they will be very vehement defires, like hunger and thirst, that are commanding: The appetite hunger it hath this property, not only to be violent in its desires, but to be terminated to one object; I must have food, says an hungry man, and nothing but food will pleafe him; offer him Musick, no, that will not content him; offer him Gold and Silver, that will not content him; he must have food, and nothing in the World but food will content and fatisfie him. So that Soul that hath a true defire after Christ, fays, I must have Christ, and none but Christ will content me; Riches, Pleasures, Honours will not fatisfie my Soul: I must have Christ, none but Chrift.

Secondly, And are your defires constant, and continued defires? It may be some men may have flashes of desires, when their Consciences are awakened, when they lie tumbling upon a fickbed, or when the wrath of God begins to be kindled against them: But tell me, Are thy defires constant? Canst thou say with David, My Soul breaketh for the longing it hath unto thy Judgments at all times? Pfalm 119. 20. I know there may be an intermission of the act of desire, but then the constant bent of the Soul is Chrisward. As a Tradefinan, that makes it his Trace to buy and fell, though he doth not always buy and fell; fo the Soul will be always trading in defire for Christ, though there may be an intermishon of desires.

Third-

Thirdly, Are they industrious desires, that make you not only to desire him, but to seek him? The desire of our Soul is to thy Name, O Lord, and to the remembrance of thee. And then, With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my Spirit will I seek thee early, Isa. 26.8, 9. If so be your desires after Christ be right, they will put you upon all means of Grace, and the using of them carefully, and conscientiously enquiring after him, and following of him in the use of every Ordinance. This is the first way, whereby you may know whether Christ be precious to you; See what your desires are: if they be strongly carried out after Christ, if they be vehement, constant and industrious desires.

Secondly, Would you know whether Jesus Christ be precious to your Souls, yea or no? then see whether your love to Jesus Christ be a true love, unseigned love; whether you love him in sincerity, or no? Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, Amen, Ephes. Oult. Implying, many love him not in sincerity. Thus you may know, whether you love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

First, You will remember Christ, your hearts will be much taken up with him; When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches, Plalm. 63. 6. Are your thoughts taken up

with him?

Secondly, If you love him in fincerity, you will hold no correspondency with fin: you will hate

fin, and hate every fin.

Thirdly, If your love to Christ be sincere, it will be accompanied with smarting sorrow for your former unkindnesses to him; as Mary Magdalen,

dalen, because she loved much, she wept much. Thus will such a Soul say, Against thee have I sinned, thee have I offended; with Judas I have betrayed thee, though thou didst never shed thy blood for him, as thou didst for me; therefore my sins are the greater, because against thee I have sinned.

Thirdly, Would you know whether Christ be precious to you, or no? let me then propound to

you these three Soul-searching Questions:

First, Tell me, What are you willing to give

for Christ?

at

ek

0

n,

ea,

9.

ey

he

n-

ife

e-

to

g.

t,

us

n

le

1-

ir

t.

15

15

t

Secondly, What are you willing to lose for Christ?

Thirdly, What pains are you willing to take

that you may obtain him?

First, If you would know whether Christ be precious to you, then answer this Question, What are you willing to give for Christ? I know nothing can be given by way of merit, do not understand me so; but what are you willing to give in the use of means?

First, Are you willing to give as much for Christ now, as you would give in a time of sickness, when you are lying upon your Death beds: when the Soul sits upon the lips, and is ready to take its leave? Are you willing to give as much now in health, as you would give in a time of sickness? Oh, when a man lies on his sick-bed, and Death knocks at his door, Christ then, it may be, would be very precious to him: Oh what would he then give for a Christ? Those in Noah's time, that never regarded the Ark all the while it was a building: yet when the Flood came, what would they have given for an Ark then? What would you give for Christ at that time when you are upon a Death-

bed, ready to be delivered by your Death-bed, to your cold Grave? Certainly, Christ is as precious now, as he will be when you lie upon a sick-bed,

when you shall look Death in the face.

Again, Are you willing to give as much for Christ now, as at the day of Judgment? Oh what feeking and fuing will there be to Christ at that day! Lord, pity me; Lord, own me, I am undone for ever without thee. Oh what feeking and fuing will there be to Christ at that day! Certainly, Christ is as precious now as he will be at that day, when he shall come in Flames of fire, taking vengeance on them that know him not, and obey not his Gospel, 2 Theff. 1.8. Can you be content to give as much for him now, as you would give in that day for him? Can you be contented to give as much for him, as a damned Soul would give for him, if it were possible he could purchate him? Certainly he is as precious now, as he would be to a damned foul, if he could be made partaker of him.

In a word, Tell me, Are you willing to give up your felves to him, wholly to be ruled by him? to give up your Understandings to him, to desire to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified? To give up your Will to him: to say, Rule in me as thou pleasest, so I may be but thine? to give up your Assections to him, to love him, to delight in him, to rejoyce in him; to say with the Apostle, God sorbid I should rejoyce in any thing, save in the Cross of Christ, Gal. 6 14. If you can do thus, then you have answered the first Question, and you may know certainly, Jesus Christ is precious to you.

Secondly,

Secondly, Tell me, What are you willing to lose for Christ, to part with for a precious Redeemer?

First, Are you willing to part with your sins, though they may be never so near and dear to you, though they be as your right hand and right eye? can you throw them away from you with detestation? Isa. 30.22, Te shall defile also the covering of your graven Image, and the Ornament of thy molten Image of gold; thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth, thou shalt say unto it, get thee hence; they shall cast away their Idols with detestation.

Again, Can you be content to part with the Word, your Estates, your Liberties, your Conforts, any thing for Christ? Understand metals.

First, If they come in competition with him. Secondly, If they stand in opposition to him.

First, If they come in competition with him: Tell me, can you hate Father, Mother, Wise, children, any thing that is near and dear to you, if it stand in competition with Christ? or any thing that stands in opposition to him? If any thing hinders the meeting of Christ and your Souls, though never so near and dear to you, can you cast it a

way? can you be content to part with it?

Thirdly, Answer me this Question, What pains can you be contented to take for the gaining of the Lord Jesus Christ? can you be as industrious and unwearied in the pursuit of those unsearchable riches that are laid up in Christ, as you are after these temporary and transitory riches, that oftentimes take to themselves wings and fly away? can you be as unsatiable, in seeking to gain Jesus Christ on the Lords Day, as you are unwearied in

X 3

your Callings on the Week day? certain it is, if Jesus Christ be precious to you, you will think no pains too great: you will think no cost too much. you will think no industry can be great enough for the purchasing this Pearl of Price; you will, with the Wife Merchant in the Gospel, sell all to purchase him; you will feek him in the Streets, as the Spouse did: you will feek him in the Assemblies: you will be driving a Trade still, that you may get more of him: more influences of Grace from him, and more conformity unto him. This is the first Use of Examination, to discover whether Jesus Christ be precious to you, or no; if your desires be strongly carried out after him, if your love be a fervent and fincere love; if you can be content to give any thing for him, and to lofe or part with any thing for his fake: and if you can be content to take any pains, and think no pains too great to gain him, who is the Pearl of great Price. The Lord make your own hearts your Judges in this particular. And so much for the first Use of Examination. There are three other Ules: a Use of Conviction, a Use of Information, and a Use of Exhortation: But I must refer them to another opportunity.



1 Pet. II. 7.

Unto you therefore which believe, he is preciour.

Have spoken to this Text in two Sermons already, upon the like occasion of our folemn approaching to the Table of the Lord; and there are two Points of Do-Arine I have drawn from these words: the first is this, That Jesus Christ is infinitely precious in himself. The second is this, As Jesus Christ is infinitely precious in himself, so is he also precious to all Believers, and highly prized by them. This Point I spake to upon the last Occasion, and opened it to you, and made one Use of Examination.

I now come to a fecond Use: that is, of Conviction: If it be fo, that Jesus Christ is thus precious to all Believers: then it follows, few, yea very few Believers there are in the World; nay, very few of those that do profess the Name of Christ: because there are very few that do prize him, very few that make that high account of him, as becomes fo rich, fo precious, fo invaluable a Redeemer.

But it may be you will fay to me, Who are they then that do not prize Jesus Christ? who are they that do not value him? I shall instance in four or

five forts of Persons :

First, They do not prize the Lord Jesus Christ. that fee no beauty in him that they should defire him; that fee no beauty in spiritual things, no beauty in Grace, no beauty in the peace of a good confcience, no beauty in Joy in the Holy Ghost, in righteousness and holiness: for in these things consists the Kingdom of God, Rom. 14. 17, For. the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Now those that see no beauty in those things that lead the Soul to Christ, in those things wherein the Kingdom of Christ consists: certainly they do not prize Christ. This is the great fault of the Fews, for which they were rejected, as the Prophet Isaiah foretold, Isa. 53. 2, 3, He shall grow up before him as a tender Plant, and as a Root cut of a dry ground; he hath no form, nor comeline[s; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we' (hould defire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. The fews look upon Christ with a carnal eye, they look upon his Humanity, the meanness of his Birth; born in a Stable, the lowners of his Parentage: the House of David being at that time but like the stump of a Tree, a dry Root: he coming from the Root of Feffe; they look upon his attendance, a company of poor Fishermen: they look upon his condition, not having a House to lay his Head in, therefore they flight him, reject him, and defpife him. Just thus it is at this day; many there are that value not at all spiritual things, neither value they the Kingdom of Cod; The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation, (Luke 17. 20.) it cometh not with

0

d

with outward Pomp and Splendour; it comes not with observation, because it is a hidden Kingdom, a spiritual Kingdom: inward Faith, and Love, and felf-denial, and other inward Graces, because these are the things belonging to the Kingdom of the Lord Tefus Christ; and being not obvious to carnal eyes, therefore they fee no beauty in them. Therefore this is a plain token they fee no beauty in Christ; they that see no beauty in Christs Kingdom, in his Ordinances, and in his Spiritual comforts, certainly they fee no beauty in Christ: There wants no beauty in him, but carnal men want eyes to behold him: certainly, spiritual things they are the most precious and invaluable Commodities that are; therefore because thou seeft no beauty in Heaven, and in heavenly things, spiritual things, the graces of the Spirit, and the comforts of the Spirit, thou art one that doft not prize the Lord Christ.

Secondly, They do not prize the Lord Jesus Christ, that prefer their lusts before him, that prefer the wills of the Flesh, and of the Mind, as the Greek word signifies, before him, in Ephes. 2.3. Those that say in their hearts, though it may be they will not speak it with their mouths, but it is the language of their hearts, We will not have this man to reign over us: we will walk in our own crooked ways, and not in the ways of Christ, in the ways of holiness. Certainly, they that prefer their lusts before him, they do not prize him.

Thirdly, They that do not prize the Messengers of Jesus Christ, they do not prize Jesus Christ himself: So says our Saviour himself express, Luke 10. 16, speaking to his Disciples, and in them to his succeding Ministers: Hethat heareth you, bear-

eth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me. When Hannun the King of the children of Anmon, cast contempt on the Messengers and Ambassadors of David, and so wickedly entreated them, by cutting off their Garments in the middle to their buttocks, and shaving off the one half of their Beards, 2 Sam. 10; it was a plain token that he despised David also, because he despised his Ambassadors.

Fourthly, They do not prize the Lord Christ, that can keep the best room they have, I mean their hearts, for creature-comforts, but the Lord Jefus Chrift, as I may fay with reverence, is thrust into the Stable. But you will fay, How does that appear? Thus; when a mans Liberty, or Estate, or Friends, or outward reputation come to be bazarded, if Christ be owned: that man now that can prefer any of his creature-accommodations, rather than run any hazard for the Lord Jesus Christ, certainly that man does not prize Christ. comes to a point, that a man must part with some, or all of his comforts and accommodation, rather than part with his Saviour; that man that can part with his Saviour rather than his comforts, certainly that man does not prize Christ. Thus was it with the Gadarens: when it came to the Point, that they must part with their Swine, or with Jesus Christ, they would part with Christ, rather than with their Swine.

Fifthly, Tuey that do not prize his Ordinances, that do not keep close to him, & to his way of worthip; those that do not set their hearts and souls to seek him, to seek his Truth; to seek his Face, to rejoyce in his Love, to content and satisfie them-

felves

felves in him; to fay, If I have but Jesus Christ, though I be as poor as Job upon the Dunghil, yet I am rich enough; certainly, these do prize the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh that we could learn to be true to our own Souls, and to love our selves so well, as not to beguile our own Souls in the latter end. That's the second Use of Conviction.

Thirdly, A third Use is this: If Christ be thus precious to all true Believers, then there are these three or four Lessons, or Doctrinal Inferences that may be gathered from this conclusion, or point of

Doctrine.

First, If Jesus Christ be so precious to Believers. then it follows, that Faith is an exceeding rich and precious Grace: it is called precious Faith, 2 Pet. 1. 1, Simon Peter, a Servant, and an Apostle of Fesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious Faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. But why is Faith fo precious a Grace? because it makes Christ so precious to our Souls, it makes a man look upon Christ with an admiring eye, it ravishes the Soul with the love of this precious Redeemer; and it makes him break out and fay, There is no Beloved like my Beloved; Oh the Dignity of his Person! Oh the Vertue of his Blood! Oh the value of his Sufferings! Oh the sweetness of his Graces! Oh the Comforts of his Spirit! Oh the excellency of those glorious and transcendent Hopes that are laid up in him! You read of Moses, that he scorned all the Treafures of Egypt; Why? because by Faith he beheld him that was invisible, Heb. 11.26,27. By the eye of Faith he lookt upon Jesus Christ, and he saw more beauty in him, than in all the Treasures of Egypt; more sweetness in one smile of his Face, than

than in ten thousand Worlds: Oh therefore that you and I could learn to trade for Faith more a great deal than for the World: Oh let us trade for this rich and precious Grace; look out for Faith, and long for Faith, and strive to believe; for until this Grace of Faith be planted in your hearts, Jesus Christ and you are strangers, Christ and you stand at a very great distance: but as soon as ever Faith is planted in the Soul, then there is instantly a closing with Christ, as quick a closing between Christ and the Soul, as there is between the Load-stone and the Iron: the Soul presently closes with him, and cleaves to him, as soon as ever it begins to believe.

Secondly, If Jesus Christ he so prrcious to Believers, then learn this Lesson, by way of Inserence, That Believers are rich and honourable Persons: Why? because Jesus Christ is to them both Riches and Honour. I gather this from the signification of the word in the Greek Text: Jesus Christ is both a Price and an Honour to his, for the word Tund signifies both a Price and Honour: Jesus Christ therefore is a Price to Believers, he is a Pearl to them.

First, He is a Pearl of inestimable Price to all those that have got an interest in him; this Pearl of Price is better worth than ten thousand worlds: by him we are enriched in all things, I Cor. 1.5, I thank my God always on your behalf, for the Grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in every thing ye are enriched by him. And you read of the unsearchable Riches of Christ, Ephes. 3.8, Unto me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the usearchable Riches of Christ. O when

a man once is gotten into Christ, his Riches cannot be told: he hath the Riches of Redemption, the Riches of Christs Merits, the Riches of Christs Spirit, and he hath the rich and glorious Purchase of Christs blood; he hath all these for his portion, he may say all these are mine: and can you name such Riches as these are? they are called unsearchable Riches: Eye hath not seen, Ear hath not heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of Man to conceive, what those unsearchable Riches are which a Believer receives by Christ; therefore a Be-

liever is infinitely Rich.

And then, A Believer is truly honourable by him: the Lord Christ is not only a Price, but an Honour to him; he is a most glorious Redeemer; Nay, Christ is not only glorious, but he is called Glory it felf, Ifa. 40. 5, And the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it: that is, Christ shall be revealed. The Prophet declares, that John Baptist, speaking of the coming of Christ, fays, The Glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: Jesus Christ is called there the Glory of the Lord. So in the New Testament he is called the glory of his People; Luke 2. 32, A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of thy people Ifrael. Indeed, no Glory can be put upon any one like this, to be a Member of Christ, to be the Spouse of Christ, to be the Servant of Christ. Theodosius, that good Emperor, esteemed it a greater honour to be Servus Christi, than Caput Regni; a greater honour to be a Servant to Christ, than to be Head of the Empire.

Thirdly, Learn this Lesson, by way of Inference, If Jesus Christ be so precious to Believers, then

certainly, Unbelief is a most dangerous, a most damnable, a Soul-destroying fin; why? because Unbelief makes Jesus Christ to be of no worth, no value, no price, no advantage at all. To you that do believe, he is precious: I, but fays the Apostle; in the next words to the Text, To them which be disobedient: that is, to them that do not believe. be is a Stone of Rumbling, a Rock of Offence; to unbelievers, the Lord Jesus Christ is as a thing of nought; it is the Apostles own expression; Saint Peter speaking of the Pharisees, and the Rulers, Acts 4. 11, This is the Stone which was fet at nought by you builders, which is become the Head of the Corner. They made nothing of Christ. To an Unb liever Christ is of no more worth, than the dirt under his foot, with Reverence be it spoken. An Unbeliever, he would fell Christ for thirty pieces of Silver, with Judas: nay, he will prefer five shillings before him. Of all fins, take heed of this fin: for this is the evil heart that is departing from the living God, Heb. 3. 12, Taze heed Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. Hereby the Soul begins to depart, to depart, to depart, till at last it hears that dreadful Sentence, Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels As Faith is the first return of the Soul to God; to Unbelief is the first departing of the Soul from God; take heed therefore of Unbelief.

Fourthly, Another Lesson by way of Inference, is this, If Jesus Christ be so precious to those that do believe in him, O how infinitely precious will he be to them that do enjoy him? If he be so precious to them that see him by the eye of Faith, how infinitely precious will he be to them that see him

face

face to face, when our Faith is brought into fruition, and our hope into our hand! Abraham faw Jesus Christ afar off: he faw him when he was to come, two thousand years before he came into the World; Abraham by an eye of Faith faw him, and he rejoyced; the Text fays, John 8. 56, Your Father Abraham rejoyced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad. If he faw him when he was at fuch a distance, and rejoyced; how does Abraham rejoyce now, when he fees him face to face! Long for that time, when you shall have a full fight of him, which is called The Beatifical Vision; that is the Vision that will make you everlastingly bleffed. One fight of Jefus Christ in Glory, will so satisfie the Soul, so beautifie it, so rejoyce it, that (it is an expression that Austin used) if so be a man were in Hell, if you could suppose such a thing to be, and had but one glimpse of the Beatifical Vision, it would swallow up all the bitterness of Hell it self. And this is that which Christ hath both promised and prayed for; he hath promifed, We shall see him as he is: and he hath prayed for it too, John 17. 24, Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou hast given me, for thou loved the before the foundation of the world. Oh long for that day when you shall see Jesus Christ as he is, fee him in his Glory; then he will be infinitely and unconceivably precious indeed, and that to all Eternity. That's the third Use of Information, in thefe four Lessons, That Faith is a most precious Grace; That Believers are rich and Honourable Persons; That Unbelief is a dangerous, and damnable, and Soul-destroying sin; and that the fight of Jesus Christ face to face in Glory . Glory, wili be infinitely and unconceivably preci-

ous and glorious indeed.

A fourth Use it is for Exhortation. If Jesus Christ be so precious to Believers: then let me befeech you, and perswade you, and prevail with you, and the Lord bow your hearts to hearken to this Exhortation this day. As ever you defire to have a certain proof and evidence that you are true Believers, and that you are true Members of Jesus Christ, and that you are real Saints (for there are many nominal, but there are but few true Saints) that you are true Servants of Jesus Christ, and truly united to him, and have communion with him, and have infinite precious priviledges by him; O then do you learn to prize Jefus Christ at a high rate, let a high price upon this precious Redeemer; let him be highest in your esteem; do your labour every day, that he may be more and more precious, and amiable, and beautiful in your eyes: Remember but that speech of our Saviour, Luke 14. 26, If any man come to me, and hate not his Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my Disciple. He that does not hate Father, &c Theie words must not be understood simply, as if our Saviour would have us to hate our Relations, as Father, Mother, Wife, Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, and our own lives: certainly that is not the meaning of the words of our Saviour, that he would have us to offer violation to the Law of Nature; it is not spoken therefore simply, but comparatively: he that does not love me fo much, fo as to hate all other in comparison of me: he that does not prize me before Father, Mother, Wife, Children, Brethren, House, Lands, yea, life it felf, and

Je

to

ing

on fin

wh

bar

and all things that are desirable, such a one hath no interest in me, and shall have no benefit by me. Now because it is an Exhortation of such infinite concernment, therefore I shall divide it into three Branches.

First, I shall shew you the manner how you

should prize Christ.

Secondly, The Motives which may perswade you to it.

Thirdly, The means that may help you in it.

First, For the manner how you must prize Christ. It may be you will say, In what manner must we prize Christ? In what manner must Christ be precious to us? Prize him in your Understandings, in your Choice, in your Affections, and in his Ordinances.

First, In your Understandings, desiring to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. 1 Cor. 2. 2. And count all things but dross and dung, in comparison of the excellency of the knowledg of Jesus Christ. Indeed, there is a thousand times more worth, and beauty, and sweetness, and excellency in Jesus Christ, than you can know; as he said, That man that knows Jesus Christ well, although he be ignorant of all other things, he is the right knowing man. If a man had all the learning of both Universities concentred in himself, and yet ignorant of Jesus Christ, he were but a poor simple Sot.

Secondly, Prize Jesus Christ in your Choice, to pitch upon him as the adequate Object, satisfying Object of your Souls; pitch upon him as the only excellent one. As a woman that selects and singles out one man from amongst all the rest, upon whom she places all her Affections for her Husband; so do you select and chuse out Jesus Christ

for your Beloved, and say, Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none on Earth that I desire in

comparison of thee.

Thirdly, Prize Jesus Christin your Affections; love him above all expressions of love: labour to be fick of love towards so sweet and precious a Saviour, as the Spoule was, Cant. 2. 5, Stay me with Flaggons, Comfort me with Apples, for I am fick of love: faying as David did, in that mournful Elegy which he made for Saul and Jonathan; speaking of Jonathan, says he, Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women, 2 Sam. 1. 26, I am distressed for thee my brother Jonathan, very pleafant hast thou been unto me, thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. - Then trust in him as the Rock of your Salvation: trust to his Wisdom to lead you, in his Power to support you; trust in his Mercy and Merit to fave you.-Again, Do you rejoyce in him? to fay as the Virgin Mary did, My Soul doth magnifie the Lord, and my Spirit rejoyeeth in God my Saviour .- And cleave to him, as to that Rock that only can deliver you, both from the raging Ocean of Gods everlasting displeasure, and from the leaking boat of your own graces: prize him in your Affections.

Fourthly, Prize him in his Ordinances, in his Word; Oh how sweet is thy Word, O Lord, that brings me good tidings of a bleffed Redeemer! The Word of God is as a Letter sent from a dear and precious Husband to his Wife. And prize him in the Sacraments, which is as a Love token or Ring sent to you from the Beloved of your Souls: Oh how should you prize these Ordinances! In the Sacrament, by an eye of Faith, you may see him bleeding, and pouring out his Soul an offering

for

for sin; in the Sacrament, you may see him crying and dying for your sakes; in a word, esteem one hours communion with him, better worth than all the pleasures in the World, as that Noble Marquess of Italy did; who said, He was not worthy of Christ, that did not esteem one hours Communion with him, better than all the treasures in the World. So much for the manner, how we must prize Jesus Christ.

Secondly, For the Motives that may perswade you to it; and Oh, that I knew what Motives might raise up your esteem of this precious Re-

deemer; I will name but thefe three:

n

e

h

n

n

t

d

e

Will either worth, or beauty or excellency, or sweetness, or Soul-satisfaction, win upon your hearts? all these are to be found in him: He is an All-sufficient-Saviour, All-sufficient for Justification, his blood can pardon; All-sufficient for Sanchiscation also, for his blood can purishe; All-sufficient for Redemption, his blood can deliver from wrath to come. Do but consider how precious this Christ is in himself, as I shewed you in the former Doctrine; precious in his Person, precious in his Titles, precious in his Offices, being a King, Priest and Prophet, precious in the purchase of his blood.

Secondly, I befeech you to confider, that Jesus Christ is the only desirable good. The common vote and voice of the World, is this, Who will shew many good? Psalm 4. 6. But why do you not say, Who will shew us Jesus Christ, who is indeed the only needful good, the All-sufficient good, the Soul-satisfying good? assure your selves, nothing under Heaven can do you good without him, nothing under Heaven can be good if you want him;

Y 2

what are Riches without Jesus Christ? what is Gold and Silver without Jesus Christ, but rotten stinking dung? what are the most Royal Robes that ever were put on by the greatest Emperour. without Jesus Christ? what are they but poluted clouts? what is the most Princely Palace without Tefus Chrift, but a Pest-house? what is Birth, Endowments, Education, without Telus Chrift, but glittering fins? So your choicest comforts and accommodations without Jesus Christ, they are ho better than gilded damnation: what are all your outward Bleffings without Christ? no better than curses. And as nothing is good without him, fo nothing can do you good without him; there is no creature in Heaven or Earth that can do you good without Christ, neither Men nor Angels: if you had all the Angels in Heaven to speak for you, they could do you no good without Christ; God himself will do you no good without Christ, he will not (if I may use such an expression) truck or trade with you, he will not exchange one word in the business of Salvation, but by Christ, John 14. 6, Jesus Saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me. You cannot have any access to God. approach to him, to stand up for your lives, or the life of your Souls, without him who is the life of your lives, and the Soul of your Souls: Pray tell me therefore, Are you contented to perish for ever in your fins? Are you contented that the curses and threatnings of the Law, those Treasures of wrath, that they should be your portion? Are you contented to be banished from the presence of God, and to be fent into a dungeon of darkness; there to be, and to be most miserable is all one?

Are

Are you contented to be fent to that blackness of darkness for ever? as the Apostle calls it, Jude 12. I know you are not: Oh then, why do you not prize Jesus Christ, by whom alone it is that you may escape eternal wrath and vengeance? Isa. 55. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which will not satisfie? Why do you triste away your time in impertinencies, in things that will not profit? why do you pour out your hearts on every lust and vanity, and in the mean time negle thim who only can give you remission of sin, and a right to the Promises, and reconciliation with God, and Eternal Salvation?

Thirdly, Let me use one Motive more. Do but consider how infinitely precious the Lord Tesus Christ is to God the Father! O what account does he make of him! He efteems him the Son of his Love, the Son of his Bosom, the Delight of his Soul, My Servant in whom my Soul delighteth. 'Jesus Christ was both a Son and a Servant in our flesh, when he took our Nature, and became our Surety, Ifa. 42. 1, Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles. What account do the Saints in Heaven make of Christ? they look upon him as the life of their lives, and the Soul of their Souls: as the heaven of their Happiness, as the joy of their Joy; the Heaven that the Saints now enjoy, it is the beholding of Jesus Christ now in Glory. Nay, do but consider what account Sinners will make of him; they that now flight him, that prefer every base lust before him, that mind the getting of every thing but Christ; Oh what account will they make at that great day, when they shall call to the the Mountains fall on them, and the Hills to cover them! Oh what would they give for a smile of his face at that day: when, if they had ten thousand Worlds in their possession, they would give it for a smile of his face! Will Christ be so precious hereaster, and shall he not be precious now? will not these Motives work upon you? are they jests and fables? If, my Brethren, such Arguments will not prevail, for my part I am out of hope to prevail with you.

Thirdly, Let me but shew you some Means that may help you to prize the Lord Christ, to make him precious to your Souls. The Means or

Helps, briefly, are these four or five:

First, The Soul must be convinced of the indispensable need that it hath of Jesus Christ; it is necessity that does inhance the price: for till the Soul be convinced of this, all the Arguments and Motives that we can use, are but like water that runs besides the Bottle, because the Bottle is stopt: all our Arguments prevail nothing, they take no impression upon the heart at all: but when a Soul once fees, either I must have Christ, or I must perish for ever, I am lost, damned, and undone for ever, I am a fire-brand of Hell for ever; O Christ is now Christ indeed to such a Soul. If ever therefore you defire to prize him according to his worth, be much in the duty-of felf-examination: turn your eyes inward, to fee the vileness of your Natures, the finfulness of your hearts, and the manifold transgressions of your lives; reason thus with thy own Soul: What am I by Nature, but a child of Wrath, and an heir of Hell, and a bondflave to Satan: a stranger to God, and an enemy to him, without God, and without Hope? the number

of

1-

it

Is

H

11

IS

0

ber of my fins are more than the hairs of my head, my heart fails me in the remembrance of them: and one fin is enough to fink me into Hell, because it is committed against an infinite Majesty, and therefore it deserves an infinite punishment: for, where God does punish, he does punish infinitely, his Tustice must have an infinite satisfaction: and there is no fatisfaction can be given to God without blood, Heb. 9. 22, For without blood there is no remission, faith the Apostle; and no blood can expiate fin, can take away the guilt of fin, but the blood of an infinite value; and no blood is of an infinite value, but the blood of this precious Redeemer, that is that blood that is of invaluable and unconceivable worth; for, for the Son of God to shed his blood, it is more than if all the Angels in Heaven, and Potentates of the Earth had laid down their lives to purchase one of our Souls: therefore I must have this blood sprinkled on my Soul, or else I must resolve to perish everlastingly; confider therefore of the need that you have of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, Do you desire to prize Jesus Christ? then labour to eat this blessed Passover with bitter herbs: I mean, labour to partake of this Sacrament with the bitter remembrance of all your former unkindnesses: all your miscarriages, failing, wandrings, and back-slidings; Oh let the remembrance of these be as bitter to you as Gall and Wormwood: Oh labour to say feelingly, It is an evil and bitter thing that thou hast provoked the Lord, (Jer. 2. 19.) that thou hast grieved his Spirit, that thou hast sorreit his kindness, that thou hast turned his grace into wantonness; O say, I have done enough

a thousand, and a thousand times to damn my Soul, if the mercy of God were one jot less than infinite; if the blood of Jesus Christ should not quench the fire of his anger, it would be burning, and burning, and burning against me to all Eternity, even as long as God shall be God; it is a bitter thing that I have provoked my God. You should in this Sacrament look upon him whom you have pierced, and mourn over him, as one that mourns for the loss of his only Son; and be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born (Zech. 12. 10.) that is the Image of his Person, and is as it were the prop and stay of his Family. This is certain, my Brethren, there are none that do prize Tesus Christ so much, as they that are stung with the sense of their own finfulness, of their own vileness; none prize the Lord Jesus Christ so much, as they that most of all feel the burthen of their own fins. Let me give you two remarkable examples: the one of a man, the other of a woman. Did ever man prize Jesus Christ more than St. Paul, that counted all his Excellencies but as dirt under his feet, in comparison of Christ? he did esteem them as things that we cast to Dogs, as the word outsand signifies? Did ever woman prize Jesus Christ more than Mary Magdalen; who you know, washt his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her, head? What is the reason that St. Paul and Mary Magdalen prized Jesus Christ so much? the reason is, Because they were so exceeding sensible of the bitterness of sin. Poul he cryes out, I am of all sinners the greatest. And Mary Magdalen you know was one out of whom was cast seven Devils, a notorious Sinner; now she being fensible of her Ans, this made her love much, because much was forgiven

given her, Luke 7. 47. Take it for a Rule, they that flight their fin, will quickly flight a Saviour; where fin is flighted, a Saviour will be flighted also; where fin is a burden, and where it is bitter, there Jesus Christ will be very sweet; the bitterness of fin adds a rellish to the sweetness of Christ. O therefore eat this Passover with bitter herbs.

Thirdly, Then get your hearts unglewed from the World: I do not fay, quite cast off your care of Earthly things: but this I fay, the world should not have so much of your hearts: fet your feet upon the World, fet your hearts upon Jesus Christ. Carnal men are so glewed to the World, and glutted with it, that it is as hard a matter for them to be pulled from it, as you find a fucking child is unwilling to part with a full Breast: O therefore use

the World as if so be you used it not.

Fourthly, Then study his Excellency, his Beauty, his Perfection: study the unsearchableness of the Promises, All the promises of God are in him Yea, and in him Amen; Study the unsearchable Riches of the covenant of Grace: as Justification, San&ification, and Adoption, which all come ftreaming in his blood; Oh that you would ftudy these more than you do. What is the reason we prize Christ so little? it is because we know so little of him; if we knew him more, we should love him more, and prize him more, and cleave to him more.

Therefore in the fifth and last place: Do you defire to prize Jesus Christ? beg earnestly that God would open your eyes to see more of his beauty, and give you hearts to taste more of his sweetness: that you may fay, Lord shew me thy Glory, and it sufficeth; Oh, one glimple of thy favour, how how sweet and precious will it be to me! Says our Saviour to the woman of Canaan, John 4. 10, If thou knewest the gift of God, if thou didst but know me, the greatest gift that ever God did bestow upon the sons of men: then, if thou knewest me, Thou wouldst have asked of me living water. If you did but know Jesus Christ, you would open your eyes to see more of him, and love him, and prize him more and more.

The last Use it is for Consolation; If Jesus Christ be so precious to all Believers: then here is a word of Consolation and Encouragement to all you that do prize him, to all you that do set your hearts upon him, to all you that do resolve to make him your Portion, your Husband, your Head, your Rock, your Redeemer, your All.

First, Can you say with the Apostle, Phil. 3. 3, I rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no considence in the sless? I can rejoyce in nothing in comparison of him: neither Riches, nor Honours, nor Parts, nor Parentage, nor in any of these outward possessions: O they are nothing to me in comparison of Jesus Christ?

Secondly, Art thou one that canst say, I can be contented to beg with him, to die with him, to die for him, to be under any reproach, or disgrace, to suffer any loss, so I may but gain him for my

Portion?

Thirdly, Art thou one that dost study more conformity to him, as well as Communion with him: desiring to be boly, as he is holy; to have his Image stampt more and more upon thy Soul?

Fourthly, Art thou one that desirest to be Ruled by him, as well as to be Redeemed by him? O Lord, Rule in me as thou pleasest, so I may be but

thine;

chine; I would be under thy Dominion, under thy Government; Lord, shew me the way thou

wouldft have me to walk in:

Then know this for thy Comfort: it is a fign that thou hast a Spouse-like affection in thee to Jesus Christ, it is a token that Christ is dear to thee, that Christ lies near thy Soul indeed; and know this for thy Comfort, thou that prizest Christ here, thou shalt enjoy him for thy Portion to all Eternity hereafter, where he shall be Light to thine eyes, and Musick to thine ears, and Comfort to thy soul, unspeakable Comfort to thy heart: and thou shalt be satisfied with his sulness, when thou shalt have thy Soul bathed in those Rivers of pleasure that are at the right hand of God to all Eternity. O that you would think of these things, and lay them up in your hearts, and be careful to walk according to these Rules!

Consider what hath been spoken, and the Lord

give you understanding in all things.

NECESSITY

HUMILIATION,

ACTS XVI. 29, 30.

Then he called for a light, and sprang in; and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas;

And brought them out, and Said, Sirs, what muft I do to be faved?

HE Lord knows who are his, faith the Apostle, (2 Tim. 2. 19.) Namely, they whom he hath chofen to life Eternal; and when once God hath fet his Privy Seal upon them, he will call them, and

bring them home to himself, in what place soever they be, though scattered amongst the Heathen: in what condition foever they be; whether high, or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned; nay, though they be lock'd up under a Calling that may

feem

feem to be a bar from coming home to God: You shall sometimes hear a man fay, My calling hinders me from God and Goodness; but I would say to fuch a one, if thou belongest to Christ, though thy calling be never fo base and unsuitable to God, and the ways of God, yet thou shalt be fetch'd home, and brought home to Jesus Christ at one time or other: witness the Jaylor here the Text speaks of, that had a calling bad enough; for instead of professing Christ and his Gospel, he was a persecutor of Christ and his People; a rough-hewen Fellow, that dealt hardly with these precious Servants of Christ, beating them, and putting them in the inward Prison, and made fast their feet in the Stocks, as you may read in the 24 verse; but Paul and Silas sang in Prison, verse 25. And take notice by the way, That God can fometimes make a Prison a Palace to those that fear him. And as they were praying, and finging Praifes to God, the Lord shook the Prison where they were: and with his shaking the Prison, he did shake the Jaylors heart; he had an Earthquake within him, as well as without him: whereupon, being greatly perplexed and amazed, the Text tells you here, He calls for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved? So that this Text tells you, and describes to you the Jaylors carriage when God first struck his heart, and gave him a fight of himself, and of his fins: and in this carriage of the Jaylor, there are these three things very observable:

His Perplexity, his Courtesie, his Question: his Perplexity, in verse 29. His Courtesie and

Question, in verse 30. .

332 The Necessity of Humiliation.

First, His Perplexity, He called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas.

Secondly, His Courtesie; the Text says, He brought them out.

Thirdly, His Question; Sirs, What must I do to

be faved?

It is the first of these I principally aim at, namely, the Jaylors Perplexity, Then he called for a light; darkness now was a terrour to him, because he was a terrour to himself, He was a Magor Missabib, a terrour round about, Jer. 20.3. And he sprang in, that is, he rush'd hastily into the Prifon, and like a man distracted, knew not what to do, nor which way to turn himself; he came trembling, being stricken with inward horror, and terror of Conscience; and pray observe it well: There is not the stoutest man breathing upon Earth, but if God fet his Conscience against him, like a Dog to fly in his face, it will pull him down, and lay him flat, and fill him with that inward horror and terror, and perplexity, that he will be more afraid of himself, than of all the world besides. Thus it was with the Jaylor here: when God came nigh him, and awakened his conscience, he fell down before Paul and Silas; God had given him a fight of his fins, and of the invisible Majesty of Christ, that was in those his precious Servants Paul and Silas, whom before he look'd upon as a couple of Rogues, and that the Whip and the Stocks were good enough for them: but now he reverenceth them, and respects them, and falls down at their feet. you fee what his Perplexity was.

My purpose is not to insist upon every particular, but to pitch upon that which is principally held

forth

forth in the words: observe therefore, when God was about to work the great work of saving Faith, and sound Conversion in the heart of this Jaylor, and by Faith in Jesus Christ to bring him to Salvation, what is the first thing that he does? First, he humbles him, and strikes him down, and lays him slat, he doth awaken and shake his conscience: this unbroken Sinner is now amazed, and perplexed, and astonished, and he knows not which way to turn himself. So then the observation I would commend to you from the words, is this:

Doct. Sound Humiliation is a necessary Antecedent, or Fore-runner to Faith and Salvation.

Would you have it plainer? then take it thus:

Those whom God intends to make true Believers, and Heirs of his Everlasting Kingdom: they are first soundly humbled, and made sensible of their own dangerous and damnable condition.

Look as a Timber-tree, that a man intends for building, first he hews it down, and then he fits it, and squares it for the building; so that Sinner whom God intends to frame for himself, and build up by Faith to Salvation; God first casts down to the ground, and lays him flat, and makes him sensible of his own lost, and dangerous, and damnable estate: Look into the Scripture, and you shall find that this is Gods Method, and Jesus Christs, and the Holy Ghosts Method.

First, This is Gods Method, and this course he took with our first Parents: he arraigned them, and past a sentence upon them, and pronounced a curse

against

against them, before ever he brings them to the knowledg of a Saviour, before ever he made that Promise, that The seed of the woman should break the Serpents head. Remarkable is that Scripture, Job 3 3. 21, 22; it describes the manner of Gods converting a Sinner, verse 14, God speaketh once, yeatwice, yet man perceiveth it not. God calls, and cryes, and knocks, and tries this way, and that way, and the other way to bring the Sinner in, to bring him home by Conversion, but all will not do; what doth he then? Read verse 21, 22. God humbleth the Sinner to the very dust, His flesh is consumed away that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were not seen flick out: his soul draweth near unto the Grave, and his life to the destroyers. His meaning is this, He is made a very Anatomy, and God brings him to the very gates of Hell: and what follows, Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found aransom.

So this was the Method of Jesus Christ; this course he took with St. Paul before he was converted: he unhorst him, and humbled him, and struck him blind; and all this while St. Paul must steep himself in sorrow, before Ananias comes to him, and speak words of comfort, Acts o. Christ would have us weary and heavy laden, Matth. 11: weary with the work of sin, and heavy laden with the weight of sin, before he will give us ease; he will have the Soul thirsty, before he gives it the water of life, Isa 55, Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters: that is, to be sensible of the want of Christ, and the worth of Christ, before he gives the Soul to taste of the water of life; and he will have the Soul sick of sin, before the Physi-

cian

h

Ы

be

Ti

th

So

fte

pli

liat

Tef

cou

to h

fcril

cian comes to it, The whole have no need of a Physician, but they that are sick, Matth. 9. 12. He will have the Sinner sick of his sin, before he will cure him.

And this is the Holy Ghosts Method too: for you shall read, the Spirit of God first convinceth of sin, before he convinceth of righteonsness, John 16.

8. First, The Spirit of God convinceth of sin for humiliation, before he convinceth of righteousness

for Justification.

And this hath been the Method of all Master-builders. John Baptist he comes levelling of Mountains, and casting down proud Sinners before they come to Christ; and St. Peter, he prick'd his Hearers to the heart, before he gave them any hope or comfort by a Saviour, Asts 2. He let them blood at the heart before he directed them how to be saved. But now, because this is a weighty Truth, and it may please God to do good to some of you all the days of your lives, to know the Method and manner of bringing Jesus Christ and the Soul together (for this is all the work we Ministers have to do); let me speak to it by way of Explication, and shew you three things.

First, What this Humiliation is?

Secondly, Whether the like measure of Humiliation be wrought in all that are brought home to Jesus Christ, or no?

Thirdly, Why God is pleased to take this course to fit men for Faith and Salvation, thus first

to humble them?

First, What this Humiliation is? Divines describe a twofold Humiliation:

1. A Passive Humiliation.

The Passive humiliation, is that whereby God humbles the Sinner, in the first work of his Conversion, and it is called A Passive Humiliation, because the Sinner is wholly Passive, and doth nothing at all conducing to his Conversion; and of

this the Text speaks of.

Secondly, There is An Active Humiliation; and this is that whereby a Sinner humbles himfelf before God : of this you read 2 Chron. 12.7, They bave humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them. Now it is not this latter I am to speak of: this, to speak properly, is nothing but the act of renewed Repentance; but I am to speak of the first, namely, that whereby God in the first work of Conversion lets a man see the need that he hath of Jesus Christ, and it may be thus described: Passive humiliation is a work of the Spirit of God, whereby a poor Sinner being stricken with a sense of his sin, and fear of wrath, doth fly out of himself and closeth with Jesus Christ; I say, It is a work of the Spirit of God, because it is the Spirit that convinceth of sin, and by convincing of fin, he humbles the Soul; and hence it is the Spirit of God in the first work of Conversion, is called the spirit of bondage, Rom. 8. 15, For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father. Why is it called the spirit of bondage? not because the Spirit of God brings the Soul into bondage: for the Spirit of God is a free Spirit, Pfalm 51.12, Uphold me with thy free Spirit; and where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty. But he is called a Spirit of bondage, because he discovers to us our bondage, and lets the Sinner see the bondage and slavery wherein he is miferably captivated under fin and Sa-

Satan. A man, before the work of Conversion is wrought, thinks himfelf a Free-man; We are Abrahams Seed, and were never in bondage to any, how sayest thou we shall be made free? John 8. 33. But now the Spirit of God comes, and lets a man fee himself in the glass of Gods Law, whereby he discovers fin to be out of measure finful; and it lets him fee himself in the glass of Conscience, and fo comes to the Sinner, and fays to him, just as Nathan did to David, Thou art the man; thou art he that lieth under the guilt of fin, and under the wrath of God, and under the condemnation of the fecond death: therefore look to it. When the Spirit of God lets a man fee himself, and his bondage, and that state of wo and misery in which he is, then he confesseth he is in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Again, I say in the description of it, that the poor Sinner is stricken with the sense of his sin, and with the fear of wrath. Before a man is humbled, he is just like a man in a dead fleep, in a drunken fleep: he hears not, he fears not, he feels not : live the Drunkard that Solomon speaks of, Prov. 23. 34, 35, Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the Sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a Mast; they have stricken me, halt thou fay, and I was not fick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when I shall awake, I will feek it yet again. But when once the Spirit of God comes to strike the Sinner to the purpose : now fin is revived, and Conscience awakened and convicted: as the Apostle Paul faith, I was alive once without the Law; alive in my own apprehension, alive without the spiritual knowledg of the Law; but fin revived, and I died, Rom. 7. 9, Then the Law shewed me I was but a dead man:

O Conscience now began to be awakened, and con-Sense of fin brings with it a fear of wrath: and hence it is, that the spirit of bondage is called a Spirit of fear, 2 Tim. 1. 7, For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of Power, of Love, and of a found mind. And this fear doth awaken a man, and leave some kind of impression upon the spirit of a man: so that he is awakened, and looks out for help out of himfelf. Again, I fay, A Sinner thus stricken with the sense of his sin, flyes out of himself, and flyes to Jesus Christ; That is, he despairs of all hope, and help in himself: I dare fay, he was never a true Believing Sinner, that was not a despairing Sinner: understand me thus, There is a Religious desperation, as well as a damning-desperation; I fay, a Sinner that is stricken with the fense of his fins, despairs of help in himself; this is an holy despair, whereby a man renounceth all hope of help in himself, and flyes to Jesus Christ. This is a certain Rule, The less a man trusts in himfelf, the more he trusts in a Saviour. That's the first thing, What this Humiliation is?

A second Question to be satisfied is this, Whether the like measure of humiliation be wrought in all

those that are brought home to Jesus Christ?

I answer, No; some have more, and some have less, according to the different tempers of mens spirits: some men are more froward, and some are more ingenious; those that are openly prophane, stout, stubborn Sinners, they usually have a great measure of humiliation: but now those that are more flexible, have a less measure of humiliation; to the sirft, God comes like a mighty rushing wind; to the second sort, he comes like a still wind, in a more mild and melting way; sometimes God breaks

in upon the Sinners heart with open violence, as he did upon St. Paul, when he was smitten down to the ground, Alts o. Sometimes again God opens the heart without any noise, as he did the heart of Lydia, Acts 16. Sometimes Cod suffers a Sinner to lie long under the spirit of bondage, those especially that he hath appointed for fome special use and fervice to himself; as the Timber that is appointed for fome special service, lies long a foaking before it be made use of. Sometimes again, Sinners are fet free from Legal terrors suddenly; now this is the least measure of Humiliation, wrought in those that are brought home to Jesus Christ, to make fin odious and loathsome to a man, and to make a man fly out of himfelf to Tesus Christ, There is a twofold Passive humiliation:

1. A Legal 2. An Evangelical Humiliation.

The Legal humiliation, is that which confifts in Legal terror, and fear of wrath, and the fense of Gods wrath, and horror of Conscience, and fear of Hell-fire.

Secondly, There is an Evangelical humiliation, and that confifts in the operation of Gods bleffed Spirit, convincing a man of fin; when the Spirit of God convinceth the Sinner, and by convincing him, empties him of himself; and by emptying him, fits him for a Saviour. Legal humiliation, (Pray mark) though it makes a greater noise, yet it is not always absolutely needful for all persons, which I prove thus: It is not a grace, because a man can never have too much grace, and a man may have too much Legal humiliation. Again, some Repro-

bates have had a great measure of Legal humiliation, and yet have perished; and some that have been converted, have had but a little measue of Legal humiliation, and yet have been faved. I fay, Legal humiliation, though it makes a great noise, is not absolutely needful: But Evangelical humiliation, though ir makes a less noise, this is absolutely needful to every person: because this drives a Sinner out of himfelt, and caufeth him to fly to Tefus Christ in a mild and melting way, making him to lock on him whom he buth pierced, and to mourn for his fin, as he that mourns for the loss of his only Son that ferves him.

The third thing to be opened, is this: But why doth God take this course in bringing men to Faith

and Salvation? The reasons are these three:

First, It is Equal. Secondly, It is Fitting. Thirdly, It is Necessary.

First, It is Equal, because it is Gods way; and there is all the reason in the World, that God thould bring us to Heaven in his own way; that it is Gods way, appears Isa. 61. 1, 2, The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me (faith Jesus Christ) because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath fent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the Captives: and the opening of the Prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn. So you see they are to be comforted that mourn, and they are to be bound up that are broken-hearted; fo that, till a man be meek and humble, and have a broken heart, he is out of Christs

Christs Commission to comfort; Christ will say to such, I have nothing to do with thee, I am sent to those that are meek, and humble, and broken-hearted, Luke 19. 10. In Matth. 18. 11, The Son of mancame to seek, and to save that which was lost. Then (may some say) he came to seek and to save all, for all were lost in Adam: but that is not the meaning; but the meaning is, All that feel themselves lost: a man may be in a lost condition, and yet never feel himself in a lost condition; but when a man sees himself to be in a lost estate, and in a damned and undone condition without Christ, Christ came to seek and to save such.

Secondly, It is Fitting that God should bring us to Faith and Salvation this way: fitting, you will say, But how?

In reference to Our selves.

First, In reserence to God: because by this humiliation, the Justice of God is acknowledged, and the Mercy of God is magnissed: these are the two great Attributes that God will have magnissed in the conversion of a Sinner. The Justice of God is acknowledged, when the Sinner falls down at the feet of God, and saith, Lord, against thee, against thee have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakelt, and clear when thou judgest, Psalm. 51.4. And the Mercy of God is wonderfully magnissed, when he hangs out a white Flag of Pardon, after all the Sinners rebellions and provocations: O now, mercy is mercy indeed! As a King, when he is about to Z.4

pardon a Traitor, he suffers him to be brought to the place of Execution, to have the Rope about his neck, and the Handkerchief drawn over his face: O how welcome is a pardon then to that Traitor! So an humbled Sinner will say, Mercy is mercy indeed, when he is convinced of his desperate, and

undone estate and condition.

Secondly, It is fitting in respect of our selves: that we may know our felves, know the plague of our hearts, 1 Kings 8. 38. God will have us to fee and to feel, that it is an evil and bitter thing, that we have sinned against him. Jer. 2 19, Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy back slidings shall reprove thee; know therefore, and see, that it is an evilthing, and bitter, that thou hast for saken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, faith the Lord God of Hosts. God would have the Sinner see his polution, and to cry out with the Leper under the Law: I am unclean, I am unclean, Levit. 13. 45. As Miriam for her miscarriage towards Moses, was finitten with a Leprosie; Moses cryed to the Lord to heal her; No, stay, faith God; If her Father had but spit in her face, should the not be ashamed seven days? She must know her felf before she be healed, Numb. 12. 10. 13, 14.

Thirdly, It is fitting in respect of Others: that they may not speak reproachfully of God, and the ways of God. If so be a Sinner could instantly step out of an Ale-house to Christ, or out of a Whorehouse to Christ; if there were no more required to get to Christ, than the putting of meat out of one Dish into another, carnal men would be ready to have very low thoughts of God, that he is such a one as themselves, that he doth patro-

nize and approve their wicked courses: but God will have the mouth of iniquity stop'd, and carnal men themselves acknowledg, that the ways of God are equal.

Thirdly, It is necessary that the Soul be humbled; I shall give you these five Reasons of the ne-

ceffity of it:

First, Because without this humiliation, the Sinner can never highly prize God. To an unhumbled Sinner, Chrift is no more esteemed (with reverence be it fpoken) than the dirt under his feet. Acts 4. 11, This is the Stone which was fet at nought by you Builders: they made no reckoning of Christ at all. Tell an unhumbled Sinner of Iustification, of Sanctification, of Adoption, of the hope of Glory, and the like: he makes no more reckoning of them, than the children of Israel did of the Manna, who loathed it: but now when a Sinner is smitten with the sense of sin, and fear of wrath, and knows the burden of guilt upon his Conscience, now Christ is Christ indeed; and he looks upon him with an admiring eye, and cryes out, O the dignity of his Person! the preciousness of his Blood! the value of his Merits! the efficacy of his Intercession! the comforts of his Spirit! Oh the comforts and excellencies that are in this sweet and precious Saviour! My Beloved (faith fuch a Soul) is the choisest of ten thousand. The poor (faith our Saviour) receive the Gofpel; that is, those that are poor in Spirit, they like the wife Merchant, will be contented to fell all to buy him who is the Pearl of invaluable Price; an humbled Sinner will fay, Give me Christ though I have a Cross with him, though I have a Prison with him; nay, though I die with him, though I die for him.

Secondly.

Secondly, Without humiliation, the Sinner can never duly and diligently seek Christ. You know, The Law is a School-master to bring us unto Christ, Gal. 3.24. The truth is, the Soul will never run to Christ to the purpose, until he be whipt by this School-master. You know the story of the City of Refuge; the Man-slayer never fled thither, until the Avenger of blood pursued him. The City of Refuge is Jesus Christ, and the Sinner never slies to Jesus Christ to purpose, until the vengeance of a sin-revenging God, and the curse of a condemning Law, and the horror of a self-accusing Conscience, pursue the Soul like a chased Deer; now it slies to

Jesus Christ to purpose.

Thirdly, Without humiliation the Sinner will never chey Christ; an unbroken Sinner is like an unbroken Colt that is not tamed, or like an unbroken Heiser that will not submit to the yoke: Jesus Christ may command what he will, but he will do what he list. But when a Sinner comes to be humbled and unbors'd, as St. Paul was, then he says, Lord, What wilt then have me to do? Though it be never so cross to my carnal and corrupt Nature, yet I will do it. Before the Sinner is humbled, he is ever complaining of the unkindness of Gods dealing with him; but after he is humbled, he is ever complaining how unkindly he deals with God.

As all disobedience springs from pride, so all obedience springs from humility.

Fourthly, Without humiliation the Sinner will never constantly cleave to Jesus Christ. There are many that seemingly close with Christ for a while, just like those that rejoyced in John Baptists Doctrine for a while, John 5.35, He was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing to rejoyce in

his light for a season. And you read of some that followed Christ for a while, but they were offended, and went back, and walked no more with him, John 6. 66. There are many Professors just like the Corn cast into the second ground in the Parable: It sprang up for a while, but in time of temptation it withered; why? because it wanted root : and why did it not root? because the Plough of humiliation went not deep enough: fo there are many Profesors that prove Apostates, and disloyal to the Lord Jesus Christ; but what is the reason? because they were never throughly humbled; they are weary of Christs yoke, because ehey never felt the burden of the Devils yoke, and of fins yoke: that Soul that hath felt the burden of Satanswoke, will fay, that Christs yoke is a sweet and easie yoke; they that are truly humbled, will never forfake Christ, but will cling and cleave to him, as a ship-wrack'd Mariner doth to a Rock: he will not part with it, because he knows it is for his life.

Fifthly, This humiliation is necessary, because without it we can never be conformable to Christ; for Christ was first humbled before he was exalted; He drank of the brook in the way, before he lift up his head, Pfalm 110. 7. Thus you have the Doctrine opened, now let us fee what Application we can make of this Point; and the Uses are but two: the one of Instruction, and the other of Exhortation. I shall give you two Instructions, and

two Exhortations.

The first Instruction or Lesson by way of Inference, is this: If found humiliation be such a neces. fary Antecedent to Faith and Salvation, then it justifies the practice of those Ministers, that take this courfe in convincing, and humbling, and wounding, and-

and awakening fleepy Sinners: you fee what we Ministers may do; nay, you see what we must do if with care and conscience we would discharge our duty : we must sometimes thunder and lighten, as St. Paul did when he made Felix to tremble, Acts 24. 25. We must strike the Sinners heart with an Arrow of Conviction, as the Arrow that was shot at Ahab, entred in at the joints of his Armour, and pierc'd his heart, 1 Kings 22. 34. We must hedg in the Sinner with inevitable Conviction, and meet him with a drawn Sword, as the Angel did Balaam, Numb. 22. 23. We must sometimes knock at the door of their hearts, and fay to them, O thou unregenerate man, I have fad news to tell thee! Thou canst never, so long as thou art in this condition, fee the face of God with comfort, or enter into his Kingdom; thou mayst fee the face of God indeed, but it will be with frowns in his Forehead, and indignation in his Countenance to thee, when he shall sentence thee to that Cotos & oxotes, that blackness of darkness for ever, Jude 13. O Drunkard, I have fad news to tell' thee! Thou must drink of the Cup of Gods wrath and indignation, which will cause thee to spew and fall, and never rise again. O Swearer, I have sad news to tell thee! That the wrath of God is like a flying Rowl, hangs over the house of every Swearer, Zech. 5. O ignorant and disobedient Sinner, I have fad news to tell thee, Jesus Christ will come in flames of fire to take vengeance on them that know him not, and obey not the Gostel, 2 Theff. 1. 7, 8. In a word, we must take any course to awaken Sinners out of their floath and fecurity.

Two forts of persons there are that oppose this kind of Preaching: but most do not love it, but dis-First, like it.

First, the openly prophane and scandalous Sinner, that would fain fleep in fin, and go to Hell in a flumber: and therefore he looks upon fuch awakening Sermons, as tormenting Sermons, Rev. 11. 10, The two Prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the Earth. Oh this convincing, quickning and awakening Doctrine, this is but a torment to many carnal men: who cry out, What ado is there with these Ministers? they will not let me be quiet, they torment me before my time. Ah poor wretch! Art thou afraid to be tormented before thy time? and art thou not afraid to be tormented time without end? There are some Beasts so furious, that there is nothing but the fire will tame them: fo there are some men so brutish that they are mad upon their evil ways: as it is faid of the Chaldeans, They are mad upon their Idols, Jer. 50. 38. So, some are mad upon finful ways and courfes, that a Minifter must spit fire in their faces to rouse them out of their fecurity and spiritual Lethargy: Art thou angry with a Minister, who in tender compassion to thy Soul, would pluck thy Soul as a firebrand out of the fire, and fave it from eternal mifery and burnings? if one of you have a leg broken, you will fend for a Chyrurgion to fet it, and you will be contented that he shall put you to great pain for the recovering of your Limb, and restoring you to your former state again; and will you not allow your Ministers to put you to some pain, and grief, and trouble, for the recovering of your Souls from that wound and breach that fin hath made upon you?

A fecond fort that oppose convincing Preaching, are Antinomians, that tell us there is no use of the Law under the Gospel: and that Ministers must

preach

preach nothing but Christ, and Grace, and Peace, and Comfort, and Mercy; and lead men to Hea-

ven in a mild, and meek, and gentle way.

To this I Reply: What, would you have us apply a Plaister where there is no fore? Would you have us apply a Cordial where they are not fick? Would you have us pour in the Oil, where there is no wound? God himself pours not in the Oil of Mercy, but into a broken Vessel, 1sa. 61. 1. The Lord knows, we delight not in preaching any terrible Doctrines to you, if you were but fitted for mercy; but if you are not fitted for Mercy, then, as the pricking Needle makes way for the fewing of the Cloth together: fo this kind of Preaching, convincing, and humbling the Sinner, makes way for the bringing of Christ and the Soul together: and therefore you may well bear with it.

A second Instruction that we may learn from hence, is this: It ferves to let us fee what the reafon is, that there are so few Believers, so few converted and convinced; O, Ministers cannot speak of this scarce without watery eyes. Truly heretofore, three thousand were converted at one Sermon: but now there is fcarce one that is converted with three thousand Sermons. is it that the work of Conversion is almost at an end in England, in London? It is rare to hear of a Soul converted; we hear of many that are perverted, that are led into by-paths of Error, and Herefie, and Blasphemy, and Schism, but it is a gare matter to hear of one converted; they are but few that fee the need they have of Christ; that prize him, that believe in him, that obey him, that constantly cleave to him: but most men are very

well contented to be in a natural condition, they are secure and quiet without Christ; but what is the Reason? Because they do not see the need they have of Christ; for if they did but fee the need they have of him, they would fay, They may better want light, than want Jesus Christ, who is the Light, and by whom they may have the Light of Life, John 8. 12: They may better want Bread for their bodies, than the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the bread and spiritual food of the Soul: I am the Bread of Life, John 6. If they did but see the need they have of him, doubtless they would close with him: but why do not they fee the need that they have of him? The Reason is, Because they are not humbled, they were never yet stricken with the fense of fin, they never yet faw the infide of themselves: they never with the Jaylor in the Text, were afrighted, amazed, stricken down in the fense of fin. Oh, this is the misery of all miseries, which Ministers have most cause to complain of, that men are not fitted enough for Jefus Christ; they are not loft enough in themselves for a Saviour, Hof. 14. 3, With thee the fatherless find mercy. Were we more hopeless, helpless and fatherless, we should find more mercy from the hand of Jesus Christ. O that God would awaken and shake fome fin-sleeping Soul this day. Oh that this Do-Arine thus opened, might be as a Thunderbolt to let some of you see the inside of your selves. O poor Sinner, thou hast an insupportable burden of sin and guilt lying on thy Soul, ready to press thee down to Hell, and yet thou feelest it not; thou hast the wrath of God hanging over thy head by the twined thred of a short life, which it may be thou mayst not be free from one year: nay, perhaps

not one month, but thou feest it not; if thou didst but fee it, then thou wouldst cry out as he did in Bosworth field, A Horse, a Horse, a Kingdom for a Horse; so thou wouldst cry out, None but Christ, nothing but Christ, ten thousand Worlds for Christ.

The fecond Use of Exhortation; And I have but

two Exhortations to tender to you:

First, I befeech you, and exhort you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, (whose poor Mesfenger I am) that you would labour to be convinced of the necessity of humiliation; believe it, be perswaded of it, be convinced of it, that thou must be broken, if ever thou wouldst have Jesus Christ to bind thee up; thou must be sick of sin, if ever thou wouldst have Jesus Christ to heal thee; thou must be dejected and cast down, if ever thou wouldst have Jesus Christ to comfort thee; if God therefore do not open thine eyes, and awaken thy Conscience, and touch thy heart, I do pronounce against thee, that there is no Christ, no Heaven, no Pardon, no Peace, no Comfort, no Salvation for thee. Oh the miserable, deplorable condition of all you that were never yet humbled, you that never yet were convinced of fin, you that never tasted the bitterness of sin, you that never felt the burden of fin, that never yet complained with the Apostle, Rom. 7, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Some derive the word from a man that is troubled with the stone in the bladder. O wretched man that I am! O miserable is the condition that you are in: you that never yet felt fin to be fin, that have not felt the burden of it, nor tafted the bitterness of it, you are not fit to come to Jesus Christ; you

are out of his Commission; for he is sent to the humble and broken hearted Sinner, 1/a. 61. It may be thou knowest what sin is, and Christ is, and Grace is, notionally; but there is a great deal of difference between knowing and inward feeling: wretched was thy condition if thou didft but feel it; but a thousand times more wretched it is, because thou feelest it not.

My fecond Exhortation to you, is this: If fo be Jound humiliation be a necessary Antecedent to Faith and Salvation; then use the utmost of your endeayours, that you may be humbled, broken, and bruifed Sinners, that you may be put into a capacity to dose with a Saviour. Now because I know this is but a harsh Exhortation; give me leave to sweeten

it with these three Considerations:

First, Remember that the promises of Grace and Mercy are made to all humbled Sinners, Levit. 26. 41, If then their uncircumcifed hearts shall be humbled, and they accept of the punishment of their iniquities; then will I remember my Covenant with Jacob, and also my Covenant with Isaac; and also my Covenant with Abraham will I remember, and I will remember the Land.

Secondly, Confider, God never looks with fo much mercy and compassion on any, as those that are most humbled, Fer. 31.18,20, When Ephraim bemoaned himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chaftised, as a Bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: I have been proud, and flout, and stubborn under all thy Rods: Turn thou me, and I shall be turned. Surely after I was turned, I repented; after I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea, even confounded. Now in the 20 verse, you have God bemoaning Ephraim; Is Ephrain my dear dear Son? is he a pleasant Child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have

mercy upon him, saith the Lord.

Thirdly, Do but consider, That this is the ordinary way that God leads men to mercy by; God usually condemns before he justifies, he breaks before he binds up, he pulls down before he builds: There is a time to pull down, and a time to build up, Eccles. 3. That may be applyed to this purpose: This is, I say, Gods ordinary way; and would you have him to go out of his usual course and way? If one of you should say to your Neighbour, Let me come in at your window, or break down your wall, and then I will come in and visit you: what answer (think you) would he make? If you do not come in at the door, the ordinary way, do not come in to me.

I, but some may say, What will you have us to do? Are we able to humble our selves? True indeed, when God hath first humbled us, then we are able to humble our selves; but you told us even now, In the first work of Conversion, we are meerly Passive, we can do nothing towards our humiliation, it is the work of the Spirit of God; you have now preach'd

Free-will to us ?

To this I answer: True indeed, in a state of Nature, we can do nothing that may please God, we cannot set one foot forwards in the way to Heaven; but yet let me tell you, There is never an unconverted Sinner but may do a great deal more than he doth, therefore I put you upon doing no more than you your selves can do, and that in these sive Particulars: which I shall speak a little to, and then have done.

Firft,

п

t

ir

n

ri

y

m

y

m

G

th

yo

First, Though you cannot humble your selves in a state of unregeneracy, yet you may suffer another to do it for you, you may suffer it to be done. A man, for example, that is to be cut of the stone, though he cannot cut himself, he may suffer another to cut him; so a man, that is sick of this defperate stony disease, of the stone in the heart, though he cannot take it away himself, he may fuffer it to be done; when the Word of God ploughs up the Fallow-ground of your hearts, you may hold up the Plough, Heb. 13.22. You may fuffer the Word of Exhortation which is tendered to you; when God wounds you by the Word, you may keep the wound open: Carnal men, when the Word hath wounded them, they lick themfelves whole by carnal counfels, and carnal company, and carnal reasonings; O what a stir do men make to shake out the Arrow of Conviction, resisting the spirit of God that is stirring in the Miniftry of the Word upon their hearts! how many are there that come in Armour to Church? they come in their Coat of Male! how many harden their necks, that the Word cannot pierce them! Now this you must not do: you must suffer the Word to rifle and ranfack your hearts: Let the Word smite you, as he faid, Pfal 141. 5, Let the Righteous smite me: Let the Word break my head, or heart, fo it may but work upon my Soul. When God rouzeth you, suppose in any sickness or cutting-cross, you may join with God in rouzing your felves: when God smiteth you, may not you smite upon your thighs as Ephraim did, and fay, I am ashamed; yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth? Jer. 31. In a word, when God humbles you, may not you humble your felves? therefore in the As 2

0

d

.

ü

e

3-

c

0

),

tire fear of the Lord, refolve to wait upon an awakning fearching, Soul-piercing Ministry, and bless God for that Sermon that stabs fin at the heart: blefs God for that Ministry that speaks most to thy Conscience; you may suffer such a thing to be done, though usually such a Ministry is look'd upon as a bug-Bear, who preacheth nothing but fire and wrath, and vengeance, and damnation. O bleffed is that Word that wounds corruption, fays the Soul. I have hewed them by my Prophets, and flain them by the words of my mouth, Hof. 6.5. God

would have his Word a faving Word.

Secondly, There is never a one of you but can ponder and weigh things in your thoughts, that you can do; For example, If you have a good price proffered for fuch a Commodity, or fuch a bargain propounded to you, or fuch a match for your Daughters, you can weigh it, and consider it, you can confider which is the best Commodity, and which is the best Match; so here, when the world comes and offers you present pay, if you will but part with the peace of a good Conscience, and comply and fwim with the stream, you shall never fee the infide of a Pr. fon: you may have this Office, and that Office, this Preferment, and that Preferment: but now fays Jesus Christ, Do but keep thy integrity, do but keep a good Conscience, though thou fuffer imprisonment, the loss of all things, thou shalt never lose by it; for, for temporal loss, thou shalt have everlasting gain, the Kingdom of Heaven; now you can ponder and weigh things in your minds: you can confider whether it is best to enjoy the World for a while, to be free from Prisons and troubles, so as to part with the peace of a good Conscience, and lose God for

for ever; or whether it is best to endure troubles, to enjoy God and the peace of a good Conscience, and to enjoy an Eternity of Bleffedness; it is better to endure a thousand Prisons, than to lose the peace of a good Conscience, and the savour of God; this, upon your confidering and pondering, you will conclude : for the Devil he offers the pleafures of fin that are but for a feafon: but fays Tefus Christ, You shall have pleasures at my right hand for evermore; no man in his wits but would fay, it is better to have the pleasures that are at Gods right hand for ever, than the pleasures of sin; which it may be I may not enjoy one year, not one month, not one day. So likewife, there is none of you but can consider where you will lie when you are dead; O fays one, I will lie in fuch a Church, or in fuch a Church yard; and cannot you confider, O but where shall my Soul lie? shall the Angels carry it into Abrahams bosom? or shall the Devils carry it into darkness, that blackness of darkness for ever? Jude 13. And you can meditate on the things that concern this life; every one can ponder on the things that concern his own temporal estate and concernment; and certainly, you may as well meditate upon the things that concern a future life: you may meditate on the joys of Heaven, and on the forrows and torments of Hell, and the precious blood of Jesus Christ. There is a story of a man that read in a Book every day that had three Leaves: a white leaf, a red leaf, a black leaf; the white leaf of the Book, that was the joys of Heaven; the red leaf, that was the blood of Jefus Christ; the black leaf, that was the torments of Hell. You may look into Hell by contemplation and meditation, that you may prevent Hell to all Eternity,

nity; you may meditate upon the blood of Christ, and steep as it were your souls in it by meditation, it may be it may foften them It is faid of the Goats blood, when nothing can foften an Adamant, the blood of Goats can; the blood of Christ, that can soften your hard hearts, when no-

thing elfe can.

Thirdly, A third thing you can do, you can forrow more, and mourn more than you do; there is none of you but can forrow and mourn for outward loffes: lofs of Friends, as Husband and Wife, or Child, perhaps for the loss of a Horse; what canst thou mourn for the loss of a Child, and canst thou not mourn for the loss of a Soul, when one Soul is worth all the Kingdoms in the World? If any of you have loft a good Bargain, or mist a good Marker, you can grieve for this; O methinks you should mourn for this, how many Market days have I loft for my Soul? I have burnt out many a precious light, and spent out my precious time; and can you not mourn for the loss of fuch a Bargain as this is? Suppose one of you should be sent for before a mighty Monarch, and should be impeach'd of high Treason before him; how would you tremble to appear before so mighty a King, that hath power in his hands to cut you off instantly! O you and I must appear before the great Judg of Heaven and Earth, the King of Kings, that knows all the fins and Treasons that ever we have committed; and you should bless God if you are cast into fear, and thereby be brought to mourn, and grieve, and forrow for your fins, Job 23. 16, For God maketh my heart foft, and the Almighty troubleth me; that is, foft by troubling of me.

Fourthly, There is never a one of you but may

leave

C

fr

j

ni

by

(1

ta

wi

in

an

make

leave gross and scandalous fins, which I prove thus you can do it for fear of men, and you may do it much more for fear of God. A prophane Swear er, if he be in the company of a Godly grave Minister. he can refrain his mouth from vile talk : he can forbear his Oaths, and blasphemous Speeches, and obscene expressions. An Adulterer, if a boy be but in the Room of seven years old, he will forbear to act his uncleanness, until the boy be out of the Room. If you can forbear gross fins for fear of men, much more can you do it for fear of God. If a boy can fay his Lesson with a Rod, certainly he can do it without a Rod: if you can abstain from gross sins for fear, certainly you can do it without, You read of the hypocritical Pharifee, he abstained from gross fins, Luke 18, God, I thank thee (faith he) I am not as other men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, &c.

Fifthly, Though it is true, a man in a state of Nature, is dead in trespasses and fin : yet then, at that time he may do many good works, works morally good, works materially good: he may fast, and pray, and give Alms; therefore it is that Daniel speaks to Nebuchadnezzar, Break off thy sins: by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mersytothe poor, Dan. 4. 27. Certainly the Prophet Daniel would never have spoken so to him, if it had not been in his power to do it. The Apostle speaking of the Gentiles, though they wanted the knowledg of the Law, and had not the Law, (faith he) Yet they did by Nature the things contained in the Law, they were a Law to themselves, which shews that the works of the Law are written in their bearts, Rom. 2. 13, 14. They that are in an unregenerate estate, they may pray, they may

Aa 4

make Conscience of praying in their Families; though they cannot pray as they should, yet they may pray as they are able: they may fall down at the feet of God, and fay, Lord, I am a poor finful wretch, I cannot please thee, praying, or not praying; thou hast promiled to give the spirit of prayer to them that ask it, Luke 11. 13, If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him? Say, Lord give me thy Spirit to break my hard heart : take any way with me, fo thy prond heart may be humbled, and hard heart broken, that I may welcom Jesus Christ to my Soul, that I may believe in him, and cast my Soul upon him. So that Beloved, I put you upon no more than you are able to do : you may fuffer the word of Exhortation, you can ponder and weigh the Word in your own hearts, you may forrow and mourn for fin : you may ab-Stain from gross fins, and you may do those works that are morally good: do what you can do; men are not damned because they can do no better, but because they will do no better, Matth. 23, O Jerusalem, ferusalem, I would have gathered thee as a Hen ber Chickens under ber wings, but ye would not. If there were no will, there would be no Hell, faith St. Austin. Do what you can, fet upon works of Holiness and Piety: Strive and put forth your strength to the uttermost endeavour of your Souls, to get your hearts humbled, to fee fin, and to figh for it, to grieve and groan for it; lay your conditions to heart, be feelingly apprehensive of that wrath that fin hath kindled, of that Justice that fin hath provoked, of that Mercy that fin hath abused, of that vengeance and anger that sin hath dedeserved to be inflicted. O were we but thus humbled, we should have cause to bless God to all E-ternity. I shall close with one word to those that have been under a spirit of bondage, that have been convinced, awakened as this Jaylor was, that have had their broken bones, that have selt the burden of sin, and it may be lie under that burden at this day: O be you comforted, its better to be broken here, than hereafter; it is better to be convinced here than convinced hereafter; it is better to be humbled here, than for God to humble the Soul in Hell to all Eternity; God will make thy Valley of Achor, a Door of Hope, Hos. 2. 15. Thou that art humbled now, shalt be exalted: and thou that mournest now, shalt be comforted.

CHRIST



Entrante South

CHRIST

THE

Bread of Life.

John VI. 35.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

His Chapter contains in it that admirable and Heavenly Sermon of our Saviour, concerning the Bread of Life; wherein you may take notice of three parts:

First, The occasion of this Sermon, that was the Peoples following of him, because they did eat of the Loaves, and were filled, Verse 26.

Secondly, The Sermon it self: and that is from vers. 27, to ver. 59.

Thirdly, You have the iffue or confequence of

the Sermon: fome believed, and fome revolted:

fome murmured, and fome marvelled.

The Text that I have now read unto you, is part of the Sermon it felf, wherein our Lord and Saviour, because of the stupidity and incredulity of his Auditors, doth again and again, both press and prove this Heavenly Doctrine, that he himself was the Bread of Life; I am (says he) the Bread of Life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst. In which Text, you may take notice of these two parts:

First, An undeniable Proposition, I am the

Bread of Life.

Secondly, A comfortable Inference upon that Proposition, He that cometh to me shall never hunger,

and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

I shall begin with the first, the evident and undeniable Proposition, I am the Bread of Life: which words must not be understood literally, as if our Saviour was fuch Corporal Bread as could be chewed in the mouth, and digefted in the stomach. as the Capernaites did fondly conceive, when they faid, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? this was as gross a conceit, as Nicodemus's, who askt, If he should go into his Mothers womb again, and But the words must be understood in a be born. Metaphorical sense; That as Bread strengthens the body, and revives the spirit, and supports the nature of a man, and enables him to perform natural actions with more vigour and vivacity; fo likewife the Lord Jesus Christ strengthens the Soul, and revives the spirit, and supports us in our spiritual life, and helps us to perform spiritual duties in a spiritual manner: therefore he faith, I am the Bread of Life. He is not only bread, but the bread of

iife, because it is he that gives us spiritual life here, and preserves that life, and will hereaster give to us Eternal life in Glory; and therefore he is called The Bread of Life. So then the Dostrine I would commend to you from hence, is this:

Doct. The Lord Jesus Christ is that living bread, that gives Spiritual and Eternal life to all those that have a part and interest in him.

This is a Truth fo unquestionable, that it is no less than six times repeated in this one Chapter: And for the better Confirmation of it, it may be demanded:

First, Wherein doth our Saviour resemble

Secondly, And how doth it appear that our Saviour is better than bread?

I shall speak briefly to them both :

First, Wherein doth our Saviour resemble bread? I will name but three particulars, though I know

more might be reckoned up.

First, Bread you know it is prepared food: the Corn must be threshed, and winnowed, and ground in a Mill, and baked in an Oven, before it can be bread for us to eat. So the Lord Jesus Christ, he was threshed, as I may say, by afflictions and tribulations, He was a man of forrows: and he was winnowed by temptations: he was baked, and scorch'd, as it were, in the Oven of his Fathers wrath: for, it was he that trod the Winepress of his Fathers wrath alone for us; and all this was done before he could be made sit Bread, that is a sit Saviour for our Souls.

Secondly,

Secondly, Bread you know it is common food, it is common to the poor, as well as to the rich; for the foolish, as well as the wise; the poor have bread if they have any thing; so the Lord Jesus Christ he is a common Saviour, common for all ranks and conditions of men; for high and low, and rich and poor, noble and ignoble; all are beholding to Jesus Christ here: There is neither Greek, nor Jew, Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond nor Free, but Christ is all and in all, Col. 3. 11.

Thirdly, Bread you know it is the principal food, it is the stay and support of a mans life, therefore it is called The staff of bread, Isa. 3. 1. So the Lord Jesus Christ he is the principal portion of the Souls of all Believers: He is the choicest of ten thousand, Cant. 5. 10. We may better want any thing than bread: The Lord Jesus Christ is as I may say, not only the food of our Souls, but the Soul of our Souls, and the Life of our

Lives.

Secondly, It may be demanded: But wherein doth Jesus Christ excel this corporal bread? I an-

fwer in these four respects:

First, Corporal bread, though it doth help to preserve life, yet it cannot give life; but now the Lord Jesus Christ is he that gives spiritual Life; he begins it, and begets it in his People, Ephes. 2. 1, You hath he quickned who were dead in trespasses and sins. And hence it is that the Lord Jesus Christ is called the second Adam: The first man Adam was made a living Soul, the last Adam was made a quickning Spirit, 1 Cor. 15. 45. And in John 5. 21, For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickneth them, even so the Son quickneth whom he will.

Secondly, Bread doth satisfie but one appetite, namely, hunger; never was it known that bread could satisfie thirst: but now the Lord Jesus Christ he can satisfie all the desires of the Soul, and supply all the wants of the Soul, he is both the bread of life, and the water of life: nay, not only bread and water, but he is cloathing to the Soul; as it is in Rom. 13. nlt. Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ; So that he is both Food and Spiritual Cloathing.

Thirdly, Bread, though it satisfie your hunger for the present, yet it cannot so take away your hunger that you shall hunger no more; if it satisfie hunger to day, you will be hungry again to morrow. But now the Lord Jesus Christ doth so satisfie the hunger of our Souls, that we shall never hunger nor thirst more: for so the Text tells you, He that comes to me shall never hunger, and he that

believeth on me shall never thir ft.

Fourthly, Corporal bread you know is perishing, and doth but nourish a perishing life, John 6. 27, Labour not for the meat that perisheth. But now the Lord Jesus Christ is not perishing bread, but that bread that endures for ever; and that life that he gives, is not a perishing life neither, John 6. 51, I am the living bread which came down from Heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread which I will give is my sless, which I will give for the life of the world. So you see the Point opened. Let me briefly apply it, because I principally aim at the second part of the Text, the comfortable Inserence. But for the improvement of this Point:

First, By way of Information; and then by way

of Exhortation.

First, By way of Information: there are three Doctrinal Inferences from the Point thus opened,

that may be thence deduced :

First, If the Lord Jesus Christ be that living bread that gives Spiritual and Eternal life to them that believe in him, then you may learn this Lesson, That fuch, and so great is the indispensable need that we have of the Lord Tefus Christ, that without him we are undone for ever. In the sid verle of this excellent Chapter: Verily, verily I fay unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you. He speaks there of eating of his flesh, and drinking his blood, in a spiritual manner. You know there are many defires of the Soul that may be dispenced with, but hunger is a defire that must be satisfied; unless you have bread for your fustenance, the body dies: fo unless you have Jesus Christ for your spiritual sustenance, your Souls die, and drop down into Hell for ever: for, look as the union of the Body with the Soul, is the life of the Body; fo the union of the Soul with Jesus Christ, is the life of the Soul. O hearken to this, thou that art yet in a natural and unregenerate estate, uncalled, unconverted, that never was yet transplanted from off the old rotten stock of Adam, and replanted into the true Vine, the Lord Jesus Christ; if thou livest in this estate, and diest in this estate, thou art undone for ever; the poorest worm that crawls upon the ground, is in a better condition than thou art in, Acts 26.27, Believest thou the Prophets? (faid St. Paul to King Agrippa) I know that thou belieweft. Believest thou this Doctrine? fay I to thee, that art yet uncalled, unconverted, I know thou believest it not : for, if thou didst believe it, thou couldest

couldest not rest contented in a Christless condition for one week, no, not for one day: but wouldest by prayers and tears, and supplications, cry out, Lord Jesus give me thy self, whatever thou denyest me: give me thy self, though I be as poor as Job upon the Dunghil. But we cannot perswade men that the danger of a natural estate and condition is so great as indeed it is; but the Lord convince you and perswade you of it.

A fecond Doctrinal Inference that may be hence deduced, is this: If Jesus Christ be the living bread, then it follows, the vanity and emptiness, and infufficiency of all Creature-accommodations is exceeding great: name what you will of these outward accommodations that the World do fo greedily gape after: whether Riches, or Honours, or Pleasures, or goodly brave Buildings, this and that: alas, we may fay of them, they are not bread, Ifa. 55.2, Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread? Your money, that is, your precious opportunities: your time, that is your money to make your Markets for Eternity with, for Moments are the Markets for Eternity; Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which fatisfieth not? Alas, alas, these outward things they are neither fatisfactory, nor permanent : they are not fatisfactory: for Solomon tells us, that He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance, with encrease, Eccles. 5. 10. As soom may you hope to fill a Chest with Wisdom and Knowledg, as to fill a Soul, which is a spiritual substance, with temporal things. And as thefe outward things are not

tl

th

yo

to

for

are fatisfactory, fo neither are they permanent or lasting, 1 Cor. 6. 13, Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them. Look as the belly devours the meat, fo the worms at last shall devour the belly, and so both meat and belly perish together. But if you can but once get this spiritual bread, the Lord Christ, you shall never perish. Alas, alas, confider your own folly and brutishness, in seeking for satisfaction here below, where none is to be found: your bread without Christ, is but gravel in your throats; your moral Vertues without Christ, are but glittering fins : your bodies without Christ, are but dust and ashes: dust that will drop down into the Grave, and ashes that are fitted for the Furnace of Hell-fire; your Souls without Christ, are but the Devils Palace: your lives without Christ, is but the service of sin; and your deaths without Christ, will be nothing else. but the wages of fin. Oh, who would rest then in a Christless condition! Who would sit down contented with these poor, transitory, shadowy comforts!

A third Lesson we may learn by way of Inference, is this: If Jesus Christ be the living bread, then our main end and errand in coming to the Lords Table, is not to feed the Body, but to feed the Soul, 1 Cor. 11.21, What, have you not Houses to eat and to drink in? saith the Apostle. So that it is not the end of your coming to the Lords Table, therefore you eat but a little piece of Bread, and drink but a little draught of Wine, to put you in mind that it is not the Body that you come to feed, but you come to feed the Soul; and therefore you should labour to get a preparation suite.

able to that spiritual bread that you are to tasse of; But what is that? you will say. I answer, There should be something done before your coming, and something done in the Administration of the Elements, and something done after the recei-

ving of the Elements.

First, There should be something done before you come: Oh bega blessing upon your spiritual bread; Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, Matth. 4. 4. I may apply it thus: Your Souls will not live by this Sacramental Bread, but by the Word of Gods blessing; If God will bless this spiritual food to you, your Souls shall live. Oh therefore beg the Blessing of God upon this Heavesly Bread.

Secondly, And then there is something to be done while you are eating this Bread; you should get your hearts all on fire with love to this blef-1ed Redeemer that was contented to be made bread, to be prepared food, as I told you even now: to be threshed, and winnowed, and ground, and bak'd, and scorch'd in the Oven of his fathers Wrath; Oh, how should your hearts be all on a flame with Love, as the two Disciples were, going to Emaus; As Jesus Christ brake bread, and gave it to shem, and opened to them the Scriptures, their hearts did burn within them, (Luke 24. 32.) they were as it were all on a fire. So should it be with you when you come to the Lords Table: you fhould have your meditations wholly taken up with that which is the life of the Sacrament, even the death of our Saviour; let not your hearts be roving, and wandering about, watch them narrowly: you will hardly keep them

them close to a duty two Minutes without great

watching.

Thirdly, There is something to be done after, when you have eaten of this living bread: that is, to be exceeding thankful: study to walk worthy of the Lord into all well-pleasing. That's the first Uic,

of Information.

The second Use is of Exhortation. Is Jesus Christ that living bread that gives eternal life to all those that have a part and interest in him? Then let my counsel be accepted with you: give no rest to your Eyes, no fatisfaction to your Souls in any condition, with any portion or priviledg whatfoever, until you have gotten this bread, until you have gotten Jesus Christ to be your portion; to be the food of your Souls. That which Solomon speaks of Wisdom, Prov. 4. 7, Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get Wisdom; and with all thy gettings, get understanding. So lay I, this is the principal Bread: therefore get Christ, and above all thy gettings, get Christ. I, but may be you will fay, How hall we get him? I answer.

First, You must highly prize him, esteeming all things but dross in comparison of him: you must esteem all outward things but as Dogs-meat in comparison of that bread which is in your Fathers

House.

Secondly, You must earnestly beg him; you must pray as the Capernaites did, Lord, evermore

give nothis bread, ver. 34, of this Chapter.

Thirdly, You must labour for him; Labour not for that meat that perisheth, but for that bread hat endures to eternal life, John 6. 27. But how must we labour for him? You must labour for him in Bb 2

the use of his Ordinances: as Praying, Reading, Hearing, Communicating at the Lords Table, and the like.

Fourthly, When you have found him, or know where this bread is to be had, you must hunger and thirst for him; for the Lord Christ will never bestow himself upon that Soul that doth not breathe

and break with longing defires for him.

Fifthly, You must be sure by Faith to apply him to your own Souls. Bread, when it stands upon the Table, is common bread; but when I have eaten it, then it is my bread: then it turns to my nourishment, to my substance; so you must make Application of Christ to your Souls.

Sixthly, If you would have Christ, you must learn to live upon him: As a man lives upon bread, so you must live upon Christ; live upon him in point of Justification, in point of Sanctification and Salvation: As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me, ver. 57, of this Chapter. If you live in him, and live upon him, you shall hereafter for ever live with him. And so much of the first Branch of the Text, the evident Proposition.

I come now to the comfortable Inference that is thence deduced: He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me, shall never thirst. By coming to Christ, is meant believing in Christ; for the latter Phrase doth expound the former: He that cometh to me; that is, he that believes in me. Coming, you know, is a motion, and in a motion there are two terms: there is the terminus a que, and terminus ad quem: something a man comes trom, and something a man comes to you

to

To believing is a motion of the Soul: a man comes from himself, from his own righteousness, from his own ends: he comes from the World, and then he comes to Christ; he comes to him, as one that is able to give him sit and sull satisfaction to his Soul; He that comes to me shall never hunger, and he that believes in me shall never thirst. Christ speaks here of a spiritual hunger, and of a spiritual thirst; the meaning is this, He that believes in me, saith our Saviour, he shall have all his wants supplied, all his desires allayed, and he shall have his Soul sully satisfied. So then the Doctrine I shall give you from this second Branch of the Text, is this:

Doct. Whosoever believes in Jesus Christ, shall by Christ have all his spiritual wants supplyed, and all his desires allayed, and his soul fully satisfied.

Why is Jesus Christ not only compared to Bread, but also to Water, Isa. 55. 1, Ho, every one that thirsteh, come to the waters of life. By water, is meant Jesus Christ. Why is he compared not to Water, but to Wine and Milk: Come, buy Wine and Milk, without Money, and without Price; but only to shew that he is able to give the Soul sit and full satisfaction? Here are two Queries I shall speak to by way of Explication.

First, How, or in what sense this Dostrine is true, He that believes in Christ, shall have all his desires

fatisfied.

Secondly, How it comes to pass, or what is the reason, that such a soul as believes in Christ shall have the spiritual desires of his soul satisfied?

3b 2

First,

First, How, or in what sense this Doctrine holds true, That he that believes in Christ, shall by Christ

have all his desires answered?

In answer to this, You must know the defires of the Soul are of three forts: there are sinful desires, and sensual desires, and spiritual defires.

First. There are finful defires of the Soul: there is no man but naturally he doth as eagerly desire to sin, as he desires to eat when he is hungry, Prov. 4. 17, They eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the Wine of violence. Naturally a man hath a Dog-like thirst after sin: some after one lust, some after another: Do you think the Scripture faith in vain, the spirit that is in us lusteth to en. wy? James 4. 5. That which is here spoken of Envy, may be spoken of any other sin. Some lust after covetousness, some lust after pride, some after envy: some after one thing, some after another. But mark now, as foon as the Soul comes to Jefus Christ, and believes in him, these desires and finful lusts shall be quenched, because the Lord Tefus Christ will make fuch a Soul to be dead to fin: A dead man desireth nothing. I know, my Brethren, that this is to be understood in part, because our mortification is imperfect, therefore all the finful defires of the Soul will not be quenched in this life. But thus far it holds true, He that is born of God sinneth not, I John 3. 9: that is, so far forth as a man is born of God, he sinneth hote there is a nature in him that sinneth not, a Divine Nature, for he is made partaker of the Divine Nature; there is something in him that doth not fin, that doth not lust after fin, but lusteth against sin: he hath something

in him that doth not lin; As the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, so the Spirit lusteth against the Flesh, Gal. 5. 17. These sensual desires shall be

quenched.

Secondly, There are fenfual defires, that is, a lusting after the lawful contentments of this life. Some lust after one dish of the World, and some after another. Zacheus, a pining Publican, he lusted after the gain of the World: I, but when he comes to Christ, this luftful desire of his is allayed; for, said he, Lord, now half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have done wrong, I will make recompence fourfold. Here is an admirable example for fome to follow, that make hafte to be rich, as Solomon hath it: He that makes baste to be rich shall not be innocent, Prov. 28. 20. Such a one had need to think of restitution. So the Disciples in the Primitive time: they fold their possessions, and brought them and laid them down at the Apostles feet, Acts 4. 35. Why at the Apostles feet? because they regarded their outward possessions (in comparison of Heavenly treasure, which they were made partakers of) no more than the dirt under their feet. Saint Paul at the first was taken with the World, it was as a fine Nofegay to him; but afterwards, when he was crucified to the World, and the World to him, he look'd upon it but as a withered Flower.

Thirdly, There are some spiritual desires of the Soul, and these shall be satisfied; those thirsts after Grace shall be satisfied; so that a man that once believes in Jesus Christ, shall no more thirst for Grace; no more thirst for Grace, may some say? why none thirst so much for Grace, as they that have Grace. It is true, and yet I shall make

my words good, he shall not thirst for Grace in

two feafes or refpects:

First, He shall not have a total and painful thirst after Grace; There is a twofold thirsting, as Divines well observe, after Grace :-There is a thirst arising from a total want of Grace: this is a painful and deadly thirst, now this thirst for Grace shall be quite quenched. - And then there is a thirst arising from a sense of the imperfection of the grace we have; and this thirst, it is true, shall never be fully fatisfied until we come to Heaven: but the painful thirst that shall be taken away; fo faith our Saviour, John 4. 14, Who soever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a Well of water springing up into everlasting life. Such a one shall never have a painful thirst more.

Secondly, A man that believes in Jesus Christ, shall not have a hopeless, and helpless thirst; although he may be thirsting after Gracestill, yet it is not a hopeless thirst, because he hath a Spring and Storehouse to go to for satisfaction: What is that Spring and Storehouse? I answer, There is a

double Spring or Storehouse :

First, The Lord Jesus Christ himself, he is the Fountain of living water, and he is that Spring that refresheth the Soul; It pleased the Father that in

him Should all fulness dwell, Col. 1. 19

Secondly, The precious Promises, they are another Spring for the Souls satisfaction. Oh, what refreshing doth often flow into the Soul from those rich and precious Promises!

But it may be you will say to me, When shall a Believer thus have all his desires satisfied, his sinful desires

desires quenched, his sensual desires allayed, and his spiritual desires after grace satisfied?

I answer, partly in this life, and partly in the life to come: Partly in this life, his defires shall be fatisfied, he shall have a fulness fuitable to his condition, while he lives upon the Earth: as a Child hath strength suitable to a Child; fo a Believer shall have a fulness suitable to his condition. The Prophet David cries out. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fat-ness, Psalm 63.5. This was a suitable sulness. But then in the life to come, there shall be a perfeet and compleat fatisfaction given in to the Soul; then shall this Scripture be fulfilled, In thy presence there is fulness of Joy, and at thy right hand are Pleasures for evermore, Pfalm 16. 11. And faith he in Pfalm 17. 15, As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. In that one Verse you have a picture of Heaven, which confifts in Vision of God. I will behold thy face in righteousness: in Conformity to God, When I awake with thy likeness: in Satisfaction in God, I shall be satisfied. Vision of God, Conformity to God, and Satisfaction in God, this makes up Heaven. And that is a most precious Scripture, Matth. 25.23, Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord. It is as if our Saviour should say, This Joy cannot enter into thee because of thy straitness, but thou maist enter into it because of its largeness. The Sea cannot enter into a Hogshead, because it is a Vessel that cannot contain it: but the Hogshead may enter into the Sea, because the Sea can fill it. Every gaping defire of the Soul shall then be fatiffied with as much Grace, and Glory, and Holinels, and

and Happiness, as it can be capable of receiving; every Vessel shall then be silled according to its capacity. A Pint, it is true, doth not contain so much as a Pottle, but the Pint shall be silled, silled as well as the Pottle.

Secondly, But have comes this to pass, that a Believer shall have all his desires satisfied? I shall

give you but two Reasons for it:

First, Because Faith makes Jesus Christ a mans own; it is the espousing Grace, it is the Wedding Ring that makes up the Match between Christ and the Soul. If Thomas do but put his singer into his Saviours side, Oh, saith he, My Lord, and my God; now he saith, Lord Jesus thou art mine. The woman as soon as she is married to her Husband, is partaker of an interest in all his Goods: Wish all my worldly Goods I thee endow. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ, as soon as by Faith he is made ours, all his is made ours: He is made of God to us Wisdom, Righteensnels, Sanstification and Redemption.

Secondly, Faith as it makes Jesus Christ ours, so by making him ours, it makes God the Father to be our salso: Faith makes God our Father to be our Husband, Isa. 54. 5, For thy Maker is thine Husband; It makes God our Father to be our Friend, our Portion, our Shield, our Rock, our Refuge, our Redeemer, our All. Now when Faith hath made Christ to be ours, and by Christ hath made God to be ours, then we may say, All is ours. A man that hath the Sea, cannot want water; he that hath the Sun, cannot want light; he that hath a Golden Mine, cannot want treasure: So he that hath gotten Jesus Christ to be his Portion, he hath all that his heart can

de-

defire: he shall have all his Soul-wants fatisfied.

Now briefly to make Application, and there are

but two Uses I shall speak unto:

First, By way of Consolation, because that is the proper Use of this Doctrine, and therefore I put it in the first place. Art thou one that art a true Believer? Hast thou cast thy Soul into the arms of Jesus Christ? Hast thou received Jesus Christ? that is, Hast thou believed in him? Hast thou received him in all his Offices, as King, as Priest, as Prophet? Art thou as willing to be ruled by him, as to be redeemed by him? Haft thou got Tefus Christ, not only by outward profession, (fo all of you have that hear me this day) but haft thou got Christ by inward possession, so that Christ is thine? Oh, lift up thy head with joy! O know affuredly, that all thy finful defires shall by little and little be quenched; though God do leave some corruptions in thee, to conflict with, and to teach thee to prize the Righteousness of Jesus Christ at a high rate, yet all these sinful desires shall by little and little be mortified: and all thy spiritual defires fully fatisfied, though not perfectly in this World, yet when thou comeft to enjoy him in Glory; but yet here in this life, thou shalt have fo much fatisfaction, that thou mayft fay with the Prophet David, My Soul is Satisfied as with Marrow and Farness. And all thy fenfual defires shall be allayed, though it may be thou haft but a poor pittance of these outward things: for God fees it fit many times that his best and soundest Sheep should be kept on the shortest Commons: although this be true, that thou haft but a small pittance of these outward things: thou wantest riches and honours, and outward accommodations, which are so much admired; yet thou mayst fay with the Apostle, 2 Cor. 6. 10, As having nothing, and yet possessing all things: Though I have nothing, yet I possess all things: How? Really I possess all things, I have all things in Capite, in Christ my Head, and really by Faith: Oh what comfort is this!

Secondly, I might in the second place make this a Touch-stone of tryal to discover to you whether you be true Believers, or no. Are thy defires after the World allayed, that now thou canst say with St. Paul, I have learned in every state there. with to be content? Hast thou not a painful thirst arising from the guilt of a felf-accusing Conscience, as thou hadft heretofore? then it is a token that thy Faith is a true Faith; and by this thou mayst know whether thou art a weak Believer, or a strong Believer; for according to the measure of your fatisfaction in these things, so you may know the measure of your Faith. If thy Soul hath large fatisfaction, then thou art a strong Believer; but if thy Soul hath but little fatisfaction, then thou art but a weak Believer.

But to close all with a word of Exhortation, and the Exhortation is to two forts briefly:

First, To those that are not Believers.

Secondly, To those that are true Believers.

First, To those that are not Believers, and my Exhortation to them, is this: O you that have not yet closed with Jesus Christ; you that have not yet seen so much beauty in him as to prize him, and insatiably to desire him, O that now you would begin to close with him: you that have not been perswaded by all former Exhortations and Invitations of Ministers heretofore; be perswaded now,

O come, come to Jesus Christ, come to the water of life: Come buy Wine and Milk, without money, and without price, come to this bread of life; thou mayft come as freely to Jesus Christ, O Sinner, whoever thou art, as the wounded Ifraelites might come to the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness: O consider what satisfaction is to be found in him! Run through all the courses of the World, run through all conditions in the World, run through all the delights of the fons of men, and fee whether they can give you fatisfaction, yea or no. Can fin give you fatisfaction? Truly, the fatiffaction which fin gives, I will tell you what it is like: it is just like the sprinkling of water upon the Smiths Forge, that makes the fire to burn fo much the hotter: or like the pouring of Oyl upon a flame, that makes it flame fo much the fiercer: this is the fatisfaction that you have by fin. Or, can the World give you fatisfaction: Alas, the World deals with you just as Absolom's Mule did with him, leaving his Master hanging in the Oak, when he had most need of her; so when you have most need of comfort and relief, Worldly riches and profits they leave you. In a day of wrath can any of these give you satisfaction ? Prov. 11. 4, They profit not in a day of wrath. Can any of these outward things give you fatisfaction? alas, the Soul of man hath a kind of infiniteness of defires in it, therefore nothing can give the Soul fatisfaction, but the infinite mercy of a Gracious God, and the infinite merits of a bleffed Redeemer, and the infinite Comforts of the Holy Ghost. As long as you live without Christ, never look for fatisfaction, look for no fatisfaction from the things of this life, Ifa. 65. 13, Therefore thus faith the

the Lord God, behold, my Servants shall eat, but ye Shall be hungry: my Servants Shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, my Servants shall rejoyce. but ye shall be ashamed. Look for no satisfaction from temporal things, and I am fure in Hell there will be no fatisfaction for you; for there you will be always thirsting, thirsting with a painful and tormenting thirst. Dives, although he had never so much wealth to tumble himself up and down in here while he lived, yet when he came to Hell (though perhaps he might by some flattering Preacher in a Funeral Sermon be lodged in Abrahams bosom, yet when he came to Hell) he had not a drop of water to cool his tongue. There is no fatisfaction to be had in any Enjoyment. nor in any condition, or place, until we come to Jefus Christ, and then we shall hunger no more, nor thirst no more: then all tears shall be wiped from cur eyes, and forrow and grief from our hearts.

My fecond Exhortation is to true Believers: Oh labour for further degrees of Faith; according to your measure of Faith, such will your fulnels and fatisfaction be, (Pfalm 81. 10) O, could you open your mouths wide: that is, could the defires of your Souls this day be widened and enlarged, they should all of them be filled : open thy mouth never fo wide, and God will fill it: Oh. do not content your felves with a small measure of Faith, but labour for a strong and great Faith; according to your Buckets, fo shall your waters be drawn: Draw water out of the Wells of Salvation, Ifa. 12. 3. What are the Wells of Salvation, but God and Jesus Christ, and his Spirit, and the Graces of the Spirit, and the Ordinances of God? these are the Wells of Salvation. If you bring

but

but little Buckets; you will get but little water if you bring large Buckets, you will get a farge deal of water. If you bring but little Faith, you will receive but little from Christ; but if you bring a strong Faith, a large and strong Bucket, O how much refreshing and Soul-latisfaction might you receive! There are three benefits which you thall

have by a strong Faith.

First, Faith hath this Property, it makes whatever it toucheth its own; According to thy Faith be it unto thee, Matth. 18. 13. So if thy Faith do but touch Tefus Christ, it will make him yours; if it do but touch the Promises, it makes them yours. The truth is, there hath been a great deal of talk of the Philosophers stone, but I know no other Philosophers stone, but Faith, and this turns all it toucheth into Gold: Bleffed is the man that by Faith can touch Jefus Christ; no man ever toucht

him by Faith, but was healed by Grace.

Secondly, You shall have this benefit: it will yield you abundance of joy and fatisfaction in the expectation of your defires, before you come to the fruition of your defires. You read of the joy of Faith, Phil. 1.25. And the Apostle prays for the Romans, that their hearts may be filled with joy and peace in believing, Rom. 15.13. When Hannah had once poured out her Soul before God, now her heart was quieted by Faith, as if she had enjoyed her desires for the present, She went away, and did eat, and ber Countenance was no more fad, 1 Sam. 1.

Thirdly, Faith will reallize all the Promises, Heb. 11.1, It is the substance of things hoped for; it makes things that are absent, present; that are afar Character with make his a vaura; if

ATTION OF STATE

1416

afar off, to be near at hand; it will bring you to Heaven, before you come to Heaven; O what a precious grace is Faith! And this is the grace you will most stand in need of, in your approaches to the Lords Table. Now the Lord strengthen this hand of Faith, that by it we may make vigorous applications of the blood of Jesus Christ to our poor Souls, who is the living bread that is able to give sit and full satisfaction to our Souls: who is that living water, whereof whosoever drinketh, shall thirst no more.

The Fruit is, where the draws a grain tent of talk :
of the Printed plane from , but it how we others :
while a more it was been I does not the outer a white
tense it into Gold to be it is the content by

Significant with the west that he will will

yand vou abrandance for and fatisfaction and the copies of a mac to the fatisfaction of water of the few states of the f

the stringful of hearth, as if we had the state of a series of the string of the state of the strings of the st

. ch. t. the at the same of the Lord for

CHRIST'S

' do tou rough the P. '

CHRISTS

Chin Butter Doff

True Disciples,

ARÉ

Doers of Gods VVill.

JOHN VII. 17.

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of my self.

Hese words are the words of our Saviour, uttered at that great feast, the seast of Tabernacles: the occasion of these words was this: The Jews marvelled at our Saviour, as you may read Verse

15, How knoweth this man Letters, having never learned? That is, how comes he to be so skilful in the Scriptures, seeing he was never taught by man? Our blessed Saviour to this Query answers two things:

C

First,

First, He tells them in the foregoing Verse, the 16th verse, that his Doctrine was not his own,

but was taught him of the Father.

Secondly, He shews them an excellent way or means, whereby they may discern truth from salf-hood, true Doctrine from corrupt Doctrine: namely, by obedience to the will of God; for, If any man will do his will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self. So then in the Text, you may take notice of two particulars:

First, An Invitation to a Duty.

Secondly, An Encouragement to that Duty.

First, An Invitation to a Duty, in these words: If any man will do his will, that is, that will do the

will of God my Father.

Secondly, The Encouragement to it, in these words: He shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self, that is, he shall know which is true Doctrine, and which is false; which is the Doctoctrine according to God and Godliness, or what is spoken for popular applause, and spoke of a mansown head: and according to these two parts of the Text, there are these two Doctrines that may be raised from the words:

- Doct. 1. That the true Disciples of Christ are Doers of the will of God.
- Doct. 2. That they that do the will of God, shall know more of it, and shall be more confirmed in their knowledg.

I begin with the first, That the true Disciples

n

of Christ, or true Christians, are such as are Doers of the will of God. For the proof of this Doctrine, take two of three places of Scripture, Matth. 7. 21, Not every one that faith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven : but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. A true Child of God, a true Professor of the Gofpel, is described by this, he is a Doer of the will of God, Rom 2.13, For not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be jufified: that is, shall be owned and accepted of God the Father. So James 1. 22, But be ye Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your own souls: cozening your selves with salie Syllogifins, as the word maganovicourou there fignifies. If a man be a Hearer of the Word only, and not a Doer of it, he cozens himself with false arguments: and the like you have in the 25 verse of the same Chapter; But who fo looketh into the perfect Law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a for zetful Hearer, but a Doer of the Word, this man shall be bleffed in his deed : the man is a bleffed Disciple of Jetus Christ. But for the better Explication of this Point, there are three things I shall open to you:

First, What is meant by the Will of God?

Seconly, How the Will of God must be done by those that are the Disciples of Christ?

Thirdly, Why the Disciples of Christ must be

Deers of the Will of God?

r

: If

of or

d

ř

First, What the will of God is? Not to trouble you with the various distinctions of the Schoolmen; briefly, there is a twofold will of God mentioned in Scripture: the one is called a Secret will, the other is called a Revealed will; you have C c 2 them

them both mentioned in one Verse, Deut. 29. 29, The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed, belong unto us, and to our Children for ever, that we may do all the words of the Law. Now our Saviour speaks here in the Text of the Revealed will of God, and it is called a Revealed will, because it is made known to us in three Books:

CBook of Nature. In the Book of the Creature Book of the Scripture.

First, The will of God is made known unto us partly in the Book of Nature. Thus many of the better fort of Heathens, that had nothing but the light of Nature, by the dictates of their own Conscience, knew what the will of God was, as appears by that, Rom. 2. 14, 15, For when the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by Nature the things contained in the Law, these having not the Law, are a Law to themselves, which shew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their Conseience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another. Mark, the Gentiles which had not the Law; that is, they had not the Law of Scripture, yet did. by Nature the things contained in the Law. The Gentiles which had not the Law of the Scripture, yet by the Law of Nature did those things that were agreeable to the will of God, and by the dicates of their own Consciences, did some things that were agreeable to the will of God; and although this light of Nature was not sufficient to bring them

them to Heaven, yet it was sufficient to leave them without excuse.

d

d

e

e

t

e

t

Secondly, This will of God is revealed in the Book of the Creature, viz. by the works of Gods Creation and Providence, as the Apostle tells us, Rom. 1. 20, For the invisible things of him, from the Creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. So that the light a man may have by Gods works in the Creation, and by his works of Providence, which the Heathen had, this Book of the Creature, is enough to leave him without excuse; much of Gods will may be read in this Book.

Thirdly, It is called a revealed will, because it is made known to us in the Book of the Scripture; of this speaks the Apostle, Heb. 13.21. Saith he, make you perfect: he prays that God would make them perfect in every good work to do his will, that is, his will revealed in the Word of God, for there doth the will of God most clearly appear; therefore when our Saviour faith here in the Text, He that doth his will: that is, he that obeys his Word, and he that makes the Word of God to be the Rule of his walking, Gal. 6. 16, To as many as walk according to this Rule, peace be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. The Word of God, that is the Rule we should walk by; this is the Pattern or Prescript of Gods revealed will. That's the first Particular.

Secondly, It may be demanded, How, or in what manner must the will of God be done?

For answer to this, for the right manner of doing the will of God, there are these seven things required:

Cc 3

First,

First, The will of God must be done knowingly. Solomon saith expressly, Prov. 19. 2, Also that the Soul be without knowledg, it is not good. All the Services that a man doth, either out of Will-Worship, or out of blind Devotion, it is but like the cutting off of a Dogs neck, as the Prophet speaks, Isa. 66-3 And therefore the Apostle bids the Romans first to prove, and know, what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will

of God, Rom. 12. 2.

Secondly, The will of God must be done believingly: By Faith, it is said, that Abel offered
unto God a more excellent Sacrifice than Cain, Heb.
11. 4. It may be Cain offered the very same Sacrif ce that Abel did, yet Abel's was accepted,
and Cain's was rejected, because Abel offered in
Faith, and Cain did not; For without Faith it
is impossile to please God, Heb. 11. 6. You eannot
do the will of God without Faith; because it is
Faith that brings Jesus Christ in its arms, and so
makes both our Persons and Prayers accepted:
No man can come to the Father, but by me, saith our
Saviour, John 14. 6. And we are said to offer up
spiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God, (how?) by
Jesus Christ; they are acceptable only by Christ,
1 Pet. 2. 5. Therefore a man must do the will of
God believingly.

Thirdly, The will of God must be done graciously, from a principle of grace, from that which is called an inward Principle, as the Apostle shews expressly, Circumcision avails nothing: no outward priviledg can make us acceptable with God, but a new Creature, Gal. 6. 15, The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be: so then they

that

that are in the flesh cannot please Gtd, Rom. 8. 7, 8. A man that is not yet in the state of grace, cannot do the will of God acceptably; the will of God must be done graciously, from a gracious

principle.

s-

11

1-

at

)-

いっし

d

.

1

t

Fourthly, The will of God must be done cordially, it must be done with the heart, Prov. 23. 26, My Son, give me thy heart. What is not done with the heart, God reckons as not done at all; therefore the first and great Commandment is this, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength; and whatever ye do in word or deed, do it heartily as to the Lord, Col. 3. 16, 17. And the Apostle exciting Servants, he bids them Obey their Masters, not with eye-service, but as doing the will of God from the heart, Ephes. 6. 6.

Fifthly, The will of God must be done sincerely, without any finister or felf-respect; a man must have upright ends and aims in doing the will of God; for God looks at our aims, as well as at our actions, 2 Kings 10: Jehn did the will of God in destroying the Worshippers of Baal, and destroying the Children of Abab, God commended Jehn for doing his will; but yet notwithstanding, because he aimed at the setling of himself in the Kingdom, more than feeking the glory of God, therefore God looked upon it but as murther: and faid, he would avenge the blood of Jezerel on the house of Jehu, Hos. I. A man may do that thing that God would have him do, and yet be punished for the doing of it, if his aims and ends be not upright: Whatever ye do, whether ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10. 31. The Pharifees fasted and prayed, but it was for vain-glory, and it was but to cloak their wickedness and iniquity, by a fair colour or pretence of piety; they made long Prayers, and in the mean time devoured Widows houses, Matth. 23. 14.

Sixthly, The will of God must be done fully, Numb. 14. 24, And my Servant Caleb, begause he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me

fully, him will I bring into the Land.

But may be you will fay, When doth a man do the will of God fully, or follow God fully? II an-

fwer,

First, When he doth not do it with a divided heart, Hosea 10. 2, Their heart is divided, now shall they be found faulty. When a mans heart is divided, partly for God, and partly for the world, then he doth not follow God fully.

Secondly, Then a man follows God fully, when he hath respect to every Command of God, as well as to one Command, Pfalm 110.6, Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all the

Commandments.

Thirdly, When he doth not retain any one fin, in the love, liking, and approbation of it, but he hates every false way, Psal 119. 104. You read that God was weary of their New Moons, and their solemn Feasts: My Soul hates them, saith God, Isa. 1. 14. Yet these New Moons, and Solemn Feasts were of Gods own institution and appointment: But why doth God hate them then? the reason is this: saith God, Recause your hands are full of blood, sull of cruelty and oppression, versely, that retain the love of sin in their hearts, and this makes their Services rejected.

Seventhly, The will of God must be done constantly, Pfalm 119.20, My Soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy Judgments at all times. So here, a man must have respect unto the will of God at all times; but there are three times especially, wherein God calls us to do his will

First, In a time of prosperity, when the World with the lusts and vanity of it, are ready to draw away our hearts to it; O then have a care to do Gods will, Deut. 6. 11, 12, When thou hast eaten and art full, when thou art in a prosperous condition) then beware lest thou forget the Lord which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, &c. The Apostle Saint Paul had learnt a great Lesson, when he faid, I have learnt in what soever state I am in, therewith to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound, Phil. 4. 11. 12. There is more danger in prosperity, than in adversity: as in a croud, a man is in danger to lofe his Purfe; fo in a croud of worldly bufineffes and prosperity, a man is in greatest danger to lofe his God.

Secondly, In a time of danger, then God calls you to do his will, that you should not decline Duty for danger fake; that you should not break a Hedg, to missa foul way. See a singular example of this in Daniel; when he knew the doing of his duty would be the hazard of his life, when he knew the writing was fealed, and that foares were laid for his life, yet he would not omit duty for the faving of his life; he prayed three times a day as he was wont to do, his Window being open in his Chamber towards Ferusalem, Dan. 6. 10. So those three Noble Worthies, who · byis

were so highly honoured by God, as to be miraculausly preserved, they would not deeline duty for dangers sake; Be it known unto thee, O King, our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from this burning Furnace: but if not, we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden Image which thou hask set up, Dan. 3. 17, 18. So singular was the courage of Saint Peter and Saint John, Acts 4. 20, We cannot but speak the things that we have seen, and heard: Threaten, or not threaten, imprison, or not imprison, we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard.

Thirdly, A third Season when God calls us to do his will, is this: when he puts an opportunity into our hands of doing some special piece of service for him; now is a price put into your hands, now a man should do the will of God especially. This is that which Mordecai told Esther, Esther 4, Who knows whether thou are come to the Kingdom for such a time as this? It is as if he should say, It may be, God hath put an opportunity into thy hand, to

help his Church at this time.

The third thing by way of Explication, is this:

But why must the Disciples of Christ be Doers of

Gods will ? The Reasons are these :

First, Because the whole Body of Religion (as I may say (consists in these two things: namely, in Believing and Obeying; take away one of these,

and Religion is a lame Religion.

Secondly, By doing the will of our Father, we shew our selves to be Disciples of Christ indeed, because we now imitate our Lord and Master, for thus did he; see that remarkable Scripture, John 6. 38, I came from Heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.

Third-

Thirdly, Because if we do not do the will of God, we shall certainly do the will of a worse Master; if we do not work in Gods service, we shall do the Devils drudgery; if we be not workers of righteousness, we shall be workers of iniquity; as appears by that in Matth. 7. 21, 23, He that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: compare it with verse 23, And then will I say unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity. It is as if our Saviour should say, Because you would not be workers of righteousness, to do the will of my Father, therefore it is that you are workers of iniquity.

Fourthly, Christians must do the will of God, because this is that which makes for the honour of God, John 15.8, Herein is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit. Look as by believing, we give honour to the Truth of God; so by obeying, we give God the honour of his Soveraignty. As obedient Children, we shall shew forth the praises of him, who hash called you out of darkness into his

marvellous light, 1 Pet. 2.9.

Before I come to the Application, there are two or three Objections that lie in the way, which I

shall endeavour to remove.

Object. 1. It may be, some will say, You do so cry up Duty, and doing the will of God, that you infringe or eclipse the Free grace of God; this is not

Preaching Free grace.

Anjw. I answer, This is not an infringing, or an eclipsing of the free-grace of God. because you must know, Faith and good Works are not opposite one to another, but they are subordinate, they

are confistent, and may stand one with another very well.

Secondly, I answer, The grace of God doth not exclude all works, but it excludes those works only that are meritorious; Good works therefore (we may fay truly) are Causes, without which we cannot be faved: though they are not Efficient Causes, nor instrumental Causes, yet they are Causes without which we cannot be faved; as the Apostle saith, Without holiness no man shall fee the Lord, Heb. 12. 14; So may I fay here, Though we be not faved for our good works, yet we shall never be faved without good works: I would have you to remember this: Good works, though they are not necessary to our Justification, yet they are necessary to our Salvation; there is a great deal of difference between these two; to be faved by faith, and faved for faith: this is certain, we are not laved for our faith; this is the errour of the Socinians, that fay, The A& of believing is our righteouthefs. Though we are not faved for faith, yet the Apostle saith, We are fawed by faith: So here, we are not faved for our good works, yet we are not faved without good works, as the Apostle faith, He that is a Doer of the Word, shall be bleffed in his deed , James 1. 25; He doth not fay for his deed: fo you may be bleffed in your good works, though not for your good works.

Thirdly, I answer; Although faith alone doth justifie, yet that faith that is alone doth not justifie; though no man is justified for his works, yet that faith that is a justifying faith, is a working Secondly, It may be objected: But why do you pressus to do the will of God, when of our selves we are not able to do it; we cannot of our selves think a good thought, nor speak a good word: much less do the will of God in that manner as you have laid down

how it must be done?

To this I answer; Our inability doth not nullifie or make void the Commands of God: God (for example) bids you believe, 1 John 3. 23, And this is his Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ; and yet. Faith it is the gift of God, Eph. 2. 8, and you cannot of your selves believe. So Saint Feter, he bid Simon Magus pray, that his sins may be forgiven him; and yet notwithstanding, no man is able of himself to pray in an acceptable manner; saith the Apostle, We know not how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit helps our instruction, Rom. 28. 6. But the Arminians they stretch the Objection yet a little further, and argue thus:

Object. If God commands us to do what we are not able to perform, then this is cruelty in God; and they give you an inflance. For example (fay they). If you tie a mans hands and bid him work, or cut off his legs ard bid him walk, this is a great deal of cruelty; to fay they, If God bid us do his will, and we have no freedom nor ability to do his will, then this is

cruelty in God.

To this I answer, It is true indeed, if God should tie our hands, or cut off our legs, then this Objection would be of some weight; but God doth not do so: God at first made man upright, he gave us ability to do his will; but if we have lost that ability, we cannot blame God, but our selves: our destruction is from our selves,

our inability to do Duty, is from our felves.

Secondly, I answer; Natural and unregenerate men, though they cannot work grace in their own hearts, yet they may do fomething in a tendency to grace; they may wait on the means of grace, they may hear as they are able, and pray as they are able, and do Duties as they are able; they may wait upon God, as they did in Alls 2, when they cryed out, Men and Brethren, what shall we do to be faved? (1 Cor. 14. 24, 25.) They may come to the Assemblies of Gods Saints, as that ignorant and Unbeliever did, though for the present he was in a flate of ignorance and unbelief, yet by hearing the Word preached, he was convinced and converted. Men are not damned for Can nots, but for Will-nots; men are not damned because they can do no better, but because they will do no better.

Thirdly, I answer; Though we do not work with God, yet God will not work without us; God faves no man against his will, God carries no man to Heaven as a Sack is carried to the Market on Horse-back; but God faves a man by bowing and bending his will, and of unwilling, making him willing. Saint Auftin faith, Qui fine auxilio tuo te Creavit, contra voluntatem tuam te non salvabit : He that made thee without thee, will not fave thee

without thee.

Fourthly, I answer this Objection of the Armimians thus: When our Saviour faith, He that doth the will of my Father, he (hall know of the Doctrine; and he supposeth that such a man hath grace in his heart, that doth enable him to do the will of God. Though it is true, an unregenerate man hath no freedom of will to do good; yet this is a certain truth, that the regenerate, fo far as they are rege-

nerate,

nerate, have freedom of will to do good.

Now for the Use and Application of this Point,

briefly.

First, By way of Information: If the Disciples of Christ are, or should be Doers of Gods will, then it follows, he that would be a true Disciple of Christ, must be a self-denying Christian; it was that I proved to you at large in many Sermons, upon Luke 9. 23. He that will be a true Christian, must be a self-denyer; but why so? it appears plainly: If the Disciple of Christmust be a Doer of Gods will; then

First, He must not do his own will, but he must deny himself in that: he must not walk in his own way, he must not live by his own rule, he must not prosecute his own ends, but he must do all accord-

ing to the will of his Lord and Master.

Secondly, If he must do Gods will; then he must not fulfil the will of the flesh, and of the mind, Ephes. 2. 3, They that are Christs Disciples, have crucified the flesh, together with the affections and tusts of it, Gal. 5. 24.

Thirdly, If he must do Gods will, then he must not do the will of men, he must not seek to please men, Gal. 1. 10, Or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of

Christ.

Fourthly, If he must make the will of God his Rule, then he must not make Providence his Rule, nor the impulse of the Spirit, as they are usually called.

First, He must not make Providence his Rule, 1 Sam. 25. 7, 8, 9: David, he had opportunity of killing Saul, who was his deadly enemy; Saul was now asteep in the Cave: he might have said, Sure-

ly here is the Providence of God, he hath put my enemy into my hand; but David would not make Providence his Rule, because he had not a Warrant from the Word of God to do any fuch thing. I would have you to remember this Rule; To follow Providence without the Word is dangerous, to follow it against the Word is damnable; but to follow Providence with the Word, that is fafe and warrantable, --- Neither must the impulse of the Spirit be the Rule of your walking. David had so strong impulse on his Spirit to destroy Nabal and his Family, for his churlishness to his Soldiers being in diffress, because he would not spare them necessaries when he sent unto him, that he said, God do so to me, and more also, if I leave any of Nabals Family and not cut off all that piffeth against the Wall, 1 Sam. 25. But upon the good counted of Abigail, Nabals Wife, he recollected himself, and saw that it was not the will of God that he should do so; but he bleffed God that he had diverted him from his purpose.

Secondly, Learn another Lesson by way of Inference, and that is this: The life of true Religion consists not in saying, but in doing; it consists not in profession, but in practice: When a man hath the Word of life in his mouth, and the life of the Word in his Conversation, then he is a Christian indeed. It's not the talking, but the walking Christian; not he that talks of the way to Heaven, and that talks of Christianity, but he that walks in the way that leads to Eternal life. This will prove you

to be Christians of a right stamp.

Thirdly, Learn this Lesson, That the will of God is the perfect Rule of Righteousness. A thing is therefore good because God wills it, for God

cannot will any thing that is not good; all his ways are equal, though our ways are unequal; all his paths are righteousness: therefore whatever God commands, it must therefore needs be good, because he wills it.

Fourthly, Learn this Lesson: If Christians must be Doers of Gods will, then it follows, that who foever is proud, stubborn, and disobedient, willingly resisting the Commands of God, such certainly cannot be the Disciples of Christ: they that fulfil their own wills, and they that walk in their own ways, and after their own wills, and after the imaginations of their own hearts: and they that fulfil the lusts of the flesh, and of the eye, those are no Disciples of Christ: for the Disciples of Christ are Doers of the will of God. O hear, and fear, all you voluptuous ones, that deny your own hearts nothing: as it was faid of Adoniah, David denyed him nothing. You that pamper the flesh, and you that study more to please men, than to please the great God of Heaven and Earth; Know affuredly, for the present you are no true Christians, no Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A fecond Use it is by way of Examination: (If time would give leave, I might press this Use home upon you) You may call your selves to account, whether you be in the number of those that do the will of God, or no; whether you do it in a right manner; whether you do it knowingly: there is a great deal of knowledg, and yet there is but a little knowledg; there is a great deal of confused knowledg, but there is but little found, savoury, experimental, distinct knowledg of God. Do you do the will of God believingly? There is much talking of the grace of Faith, but little living the life

of Faith. - Do you do the will of God gracioully, from a principle of grace? It is one thing for a Jack or Clock that hath a constrained motion. to go: and another thing, for a man that walks and moves by a principle of life that is within. Do you duties from an inward principle of grace? And do you do the will of God cordially from the heart? And do you do the will of God fincerely, aiming at the honour and glory of God? And do you do it fully and constantly? Do not these Questions puzzle many of you? What fatisfactory answer can your Consciences give to such Interrogatories as these are? Happy is the man that with a good Conscience can give answer to these Questions: that can fay, It is the desire of my heart in sincerity, to do the will of God fully and constantly.

Thirdly, For a close of this first Point, with a word of Exhortation: I beseech you, as you would be Disciples of Christ, set upon this work of doing the will of God; and here let me shew you some

d

C

Rules and Directions:

First, Would you do the will of God? then shake off security, and slothfulness, and formality, and coldness in Religion; formality eats out the heart of Religion: Strive to enter in at the strait gate, strive as in an Agony, Luke 13.24. Whatever you do in the service of God, do it with all your might. It was the great commendation of that good King Hezekiah, That in every work that he began in the service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandements, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, 2 Chron. 31.21.

Secondly, Labour for a strong Faith, for Faith is the Nurse of Obedience, Heb. 11. 8, By Faith Abraham obeyed God; and he obeyed him in as hard

hard Commands as ever you heard of, which was to leave his Countrey, to leave his own Habitation, and all that he had, and to go into a strange Land, into a place he knew not whither: another Command that he obeyed, was in the sacrificing of his dearest and only Son Isaac: By Faith he obeyed God. And you read of the Obedience of Faith, Rom. 16.26.

Thirdly, Would you do the will of God? then fet about it without delay; To day, if you will hear his voyce, harden not your hearts, Heb. 3.7. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments,

Plalm 119.60.

Fourthly, Study Self-denial: cross your own wills, that Gods will may be fulfilled; all the controversie between God and such poor worms as we are, is this: Whether Gods will or ours shall be obeyed? Study Self denial; for, if Gods will, and your will meet upon a narrow Bridg, and one must give way to the other, if you be not well ballasted with self-denial, you will cross Gods will, to do your own.

Now let me lay before you some Motives to

quicken you to do the will of God.

First, I beseech you to remember this: This doing of the will of God, will prove you to be the Children of God, that you have God to be your Father. O what an honour is it to have God to be your Father! It is more than if you had all the Kingdonis of the world in your possession for so many thousand years. This doing of the will of God, will shew you to be the true Children of God; for, how doth our Saviour prove those stubborn fews to be the children of the Devil? John 8.44, You are of your father the Devit, and the will

of your father you will do; You do the Devils will, and therefore you are the Devils children. So here, if you do the will of your Heavenly Father, it is a

plain token that you are his Children.

Secondly, Consider what a high price and esteem you shall be in with the Lord Christ himself, by doing the will of God; 'consider what a high price the Lord Christ will put upon you; you shall be related to him, Matth. 12 ult. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my Brother, and Sister, and Mother. Christ looks upon such a one in near relation to himself.

Thirdly, Confider, this is that which will yield you Honey and fweetness in all conditions, if you be eareful to do the will of your Heavenly Father, Psalm 63. 5, My Soul shall be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness. And that is an excellent Scripture, Pfalm 119.56, This I had because I kept thy Precepts: This I had, what is that? This comfort I had, this supportation I had in all my afflictions: this confolation I had, this fweet Communion with God I had; why? because I kept thy Precepts, I obeyed thy will. Look how much Obedience is vielded to the Commands of God, fo much Comfort doth flow into the Soul; God usually gives in Comforts proportionably to our Obedience. Oh the fweet Soul fatisfying Confolation a Child of God finds in the ways of God, and in doing the will of God! especially when he lies on his deathbed, then it will be sweeter to him than the Hony & the Hony-comb: then will he fay with good King Hezekiah, when he lay upon his death-bed; Lord, Remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which was good in thy fight. Oh that sweet satisfaction that

that a Soul shall find in God, when he comes to ap-

pear before God!

Then here is one Motive more in the Text, and that is the next Point I shall come unto, the great encouragement that he shall have in doing the will of God; for, saith our Saviour, He that doth the will of God, he shall know of the Dostrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self. This is the Point I shall speak to next time, They that are the Doers of the will of God, shall know more of his will, and shall be more assured of what his will is.

Dd 3

JOHN



JOHN VII. 17.

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.

> Arine, which is principally and efpecially held forth in this Text, and it is this:

That he that doth the will of God, shall know more of it, and shall be more assured of what he knows.

For the better handling of this weighty Truth, uttered by our Lord Jesus Christ, it will not be amis to divide the Doctrine into two Branches, or into two Propositions, and to speak distinctly to each of them:

The first Branch of the Doctrine, is this: He that doth the will of God shall know more of his will. The fecond, is this: He that doth the will of God

shall be more assured of what he knows.

For the first Proposition, or the first Branch of the Doctrine: He that doth the will of God, shall know more of his will. God will reveal himself more fully, more clearly, to such a Soul as is careful to live up to his light, to walk according to the mea-

fure

fure of knowledg he hath received; this is that our Saviour promiseth, in Matth. 13. 12, For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but who soever bath not, from him shall be taken away, even that which he hath. Whoso. ever hath, to him shall be given: What is the meaning of this? That is, as learned Pareus well expounds the place. He that hath the beginning of faving knowledg, and found Conversion, and fincere Faith and Obedience, To bim shall be given. What shall be given? There shall be given an encrease of that knowledg, an encrease of that faith, an encrease of that love, an encrease of that obedience: Who soever bath, to bim shall be given. But on the contrary, Whosver bath not, from him shall be taken away, that he seemeth to have: that is, from Hypocrites that make a fair shew, as if they had grace, faving knowledg, true repentance, and the like : from him shall be taken away that he feemeth to have. This is an excellent Scripture to prove the perseverance of the Saints, they shall encrease in grace; but then on the contrary, it proves the warping, declining, and withering condition of Hypocrites, they shall grow worse and worse, and lose those gifts that they have. The Arminians they make a wicked construction and interpretation of this place of Scripture: for they fay, He that hath, and well improves his natural parts and abilities, he deserves the gift of Saving grace. This is their Exposition, He that well useth the gift of Nature, doth deserve of God the gift of saving grace; this is a falle Exposition, and a reafoning against Reason; for our Saviours words must be understood thus; To him that hath, shall be given. He that well useth the gifts of Na-Dd 4 ture,

ture, true indeed, he shall have an encrease of the gifts of Nature; for example, Aristotle and Plato, and the better fort of Heathen, well using the gifts of Nature, had the gifts of Nature encreased, and they grew to be excellent men, fo far as the light of nature would carry them, God gave them an encrease of the gifts of Nature; but now, he that well useth the gifts of grace, to him shall be given, he shall have an encrease of those gifts of grace. Hitherto tends that excellent passage of the Prophet David, Pfalm 29. 12, What man is he that fearcth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall chuse. Mark this Scripture well; That man that conscientiously walketh in the fear of the Lord, and in obedience to his Commands, he shall have more light, and more direction from the God of his Salvation; God will teach him, and God will direct him, and God will enable him to walk in a way that is well-pleafing in his fight; that God whom he fears, will guide and direct him to walk in paths of righteoutness. So in verse 14, of the fame Pfalm, The fecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will hew them his Covenant. A marvellous fweet and comfortable Scripture! The secret of the Lord: that is, God will reveal some secret, some mysterie of his, some mysteries of grace, and of the power of grace, to those that do fear him, and conscientiously practise what they know; God will (as I may fay) make them of his Privy-Council: they shall be acquainted with fonie secrets of God, that others are not acquainted with: and the Prophet here instances in one fecret, God will shew them his Covenant. O what a sweet Promise is that ! God will shew them the excellency and fweetness of the Covenant of grace; that

that Covenant David speaks of, 2 Sam. 23, Al. though my Honse be not so with God. Alas, I have had many failings, failings in my Political Relations, and failings in my Domestical Relations, as a King, as a Mafter, as a Father; though my House be not so with God, though it hath not been ordered as it should be, yet he hath made with me a Covenant, sure and stedfast, and ordered in all things aright. Never mortal man was faved by a Covenant of works; all that have been, and all that shall be faved, were and shall be faved by a Covenant of grace. Now, that man that feareth God, God will shew him the Covenant of grace, and God will shew that man the unconceivable beauty, and fweetness, and all-sufficiency that is in Tefus Christ! God will shew to such a man the marvellous fweet, and fecret contentment that is in the power of Godliness! God will shew such a man the invaluable comforts, of his Spirit, the Sweet-meats of Heaven, those Soul-ravishing, and Soul fatisfying comforts that delight the Soul. Pfalm 94. 19, Thy Comforts delight my Soul. God will shew such a man the transcendent excellencies of those glorious hopes that are laid up in Heaven for the Saints in light. Thus the fecrets of the Lord are with them that fear him. Some fecrets and mysteries that are not shewn to the World, God will reveal to all those that fear his Name, that do conscientiously walk before him, that live up to their light. And what a sweet and precious Promife is that, which our Saviour made in John 14. 21, He that hath my Commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and manifest my self to him. Mark, that

that man that loves God, and that walks in a way of obedience, that lives up to his light, that doth the will of God, he shall know more of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ will more fully manifest himself unto him, I will love him, and I will manifest my self unto him, he shall have more discoveries of my love. To name but one Scripture more: 2 Pet. 3. 18, But grow in grace, and in the knowledg of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. These two go together: if you grow in grace, certainly you shall grow in knowledg; if you grow in obedience, certainly your obedience shall encrease your knowledg in the mysteries of God.

For the Explication of the Doctrine, two Que-

ries there are that would be fatisfied :

First, How, or in what respect our obedience shall

encrease our knowledg?

Secondly, How it comes to pass, or what reason can be rendred, why the obedient Christian shall know

more of Gods will?

For the first, How, or in what respect our obedience shall encrease our knowledg? He that obeys the will of God, shall know more of his will. How shall he know more?

I answer, The knowledg of an obedient Chri-

stian shall be encreased in three respects:

First, In regard of its Subject. Secondly, In regard of its Object.

Thirdly, In regard of the Manner of it.

First, The knowledg of an obedient Christian shall be encreased in the Subject of it, or the Seat of it where it is placed, as I may call it; now the Seat of knowledg is the mind of man, the intellectual part of man; his intellectual faculty shall be enlarged by his obedience, it shall be made more

more capable of receiving Heavenly truths than it was before. God will enlarge that mans understanding: whereas before he was but a Babe in knowledg and understanding, now he shall be a grown man; whereas before he could not digest Milk, now he shall be able to digest strong Meat; whereas before he was but faint and feeble in knowledg, now he shall be strong like David, Zech. 12.8, In that day shall the Lord defend the Inhabitants of ferusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day, shall be as David.

Secondly, The knowledg of an obedient Christian shall be encreased and enlarged in the Object of it; the Object I call those matters or things that are to be known: such a one shall know more truths, more mysteries of Godliness, more of Gods secrets, he shall have more manifestations of the Spirit of God revealed to him, more discoveries of Truth from day to day: it is that which God hath promised, Isa. 11.9, The Earth shall be full of the knowledg of the Lord, as the waters cover the Sea. The Prophet speaks of a larger measure of knowledg, and surther discoveries of truths than was wont to be made.

Thirdly, The knowledg of an obedient Christian shall be encreased in regard of the Manner of knowledg; he shall know the Truths of God in a better manner than he was wont to do: How is that? you will say. I answer, and shall give you an instance in five particulars:

First, He shall know truths more inwardly.

Secondly, He shall know truths more experimentally.

Thirdly, He shall know truths more transformingly.

Fourth-

Fourthly, He shall know truths more powerfully.

Fifthly, He shall know truths more fatisfy-

ingly.

First, An obedient Christian shall know truths more inwardly, more feelingly than he was wont to do; not only have a bare apprehension, but fuch a knowledg as shall take an impression upon his heart: and therefore this inward knowledg is compared to feeing, and to tafting, and to

fmelling.

First, It is compared to. Seeing, Eph. 3.8, 9, Unto me who am less than the least of all Saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the Unsearchable Riches of Christ; and to make all men see (not only know, but see) what is the fellowship of the mysterie which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who Created all things by Jesus Chuist. The Italian Translation renders it, that all men may fee what was the dispensation of the Mysterie which was hid from the beginning of the World, which God was pleafed to hide in himself from the beginning of the World, that all men may fee. I quote that Scripture to prove, that inward Knowledg is compared to Seeing, and Seeing is more than a bare Report, according to that of Job, Job 42. 15, I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye feeth thee, I abhor my felf in dust and alhes.

Secondly, This inward Knowledg is compared to Tasting, 1 Pet. 2. 3, If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Tafting is more than Knowing, and Tafting is more than Seeing. If all the Orators in the World should describe what

the sweetness of Honey is, they could not do it so well as a man that tasts it. Now the Soul comes to tast the sweetness that is in Jesus Christ. Notional knowledg is one thing, and Tasting knowledg is another thing; they have a feeling, experimental knowledg in their own hearts. That is another.

Thirdly, This inward Knowledg is compared, not only to Seeing, and Tasting, but it is compared to Smelling also, Ifa. 11. 3, And the Spirit of the Lord shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: So the words are read; but the Hebrew phrase carries it thus, and so it is in the Margin of your Bibles, The Spirit of the Lord shall make him of quick scent, or smell, in the fear of the Lord: That is, a man that is once taught by the Spirit of God, that is taught of God, as our Saviour useth the Phrase such a man shall scent, and fmell, and favour, and breathe out nothing but holiness. As our Saviour, it is said of him, All thy garments smell of Myrrh, and Aloes, and Cassia, Pfalm 45.8, And because of the savour of thy good Ointments, thy Name is as Ointment poured forth, Cant. 1. 3. Look as the Ointment that was poured on our Saviours head, left fuch a fcent or fmell behind it, that the whole house was filled with the favour of it, John 12. 3. So is it in this case; a man that hath once received the Spirit of God, and is taught by the Spirit of God, such a man shall have such a sweet favour of the knowledg of God, that it shall be able to diffuse it self to others, 2 Cor. 2. 14. The Apostle Saint Paul bleffeth God for this, that he caused them to triumph in Christ, and made manifest the savour of his knowledg by them in every place. And our Latin word for for Wisdom, Sapientia, it hath its derivation from this, it is a savoury Knowledg. So that this inward Knowledg, is more than bare apprehension: It is you see compared to Seeing, Touching, and

to Smelling.

Secondly, He shall know truths more experimentally than he did before; and this is that you read of, John 4.42: It is the speech of the Samarians to the woman that had left her Water-pot, and went into the City of Samaria, and declared to them of the City, what she had heard and seen concerning Christ; Now (say they) we believe not for thy sayings, for we have heard him our selves, and know that this indeed is the Christ, the Saviour of the world. And thus likewise did the Disciples make a Consession of Christ, John 6.69, And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son

of the living God.

Thirdly, An obedient Ohristian shall know truths more transformingly: that is, he shall be transformed into the very Image of those truths that heknows, 2 Cor. 3. ult. But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glary of the Lord; are changed into the same Image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord; That is, we are changed from one degree of grace unto another, by the Spirit of God. That is an excellent knowledg that is a transforming knowledg, that makes a Christian have a heart framed into the Word of God: that is cast into the Mould of the Doctrine of the Word of God, made like unto it: as Lead that is melted and cast into a Mould, is of the shape of the Mould, Rom. 6. 17, But ye have obeyed from the heart, that form of Doctrine which was delivered ye, or, into which ye were delivered or caft.

Fourth-

Fourthly, An obedient Christian shall know truths more powerfully than he did before, that those truths which he knows shall over-awe his heart, that he dare do nothing against the truth, but for the truth, 2 Cor. 13. 8, For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. Acts 4. 20. We cannot but speak the things which we have heard and feen. It was an excellent speech of Saint Hierom, I can die for the truth, but I cannot deny the truth, nor be filent; whereas another man, it may be he can oppose the truth, and the ways of truth, though he knows he ought not to do it; it may be, another man can break his Vows, and Covenants, and Promises, and Protestations, although he knows the fin of Covenant-breaking is a grievous fin, and shall be severely punished, as appears by that remarkable Scripture, Ezek. 17. 15, 16: Where it is testified of Zedekiah, that after he had made a Covenant with Nebuchadnezzar, he rebelled against him; and faith God, Shall he profper, he that doth such things as these are? shall he prolong his days? He hath broken his Covenant, faith God, shall he be delivered? As I live, faith the Lord, he shall die in that Land for his Covenantbreaking. So I fay, a man may have fo much knowledg, that he knows fuch and fuch things are fin, and he may know the Judgment of God, that they that do such things, are worthy of death: yet they do it, and take pleasure in them that do it. For example: They know that Whoredom is a fin, and a damnable fin, that carries thousands to Hell: Stollen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant; but he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her Guests are in the depths of Hell, Prov. 9. 17, 18. Those works of

of darkness are pleasant for a while; but the Devils banquet, shall have the Devils shot. Though a wicked man knows that whoredom is a sin, yet his knowledg is so weak, that it hath no powerful influence upon his heart and life; but now an obedient Christian, he shall know truths so powerfully, that they shall have an awe upon his Soul. Thus was it with the Prophet David, Psalm 119.

161, Princes have persecuted me without a cause, but my heart stands in awe of thy Word. That is the fourth: an obedient Christian knows truths more

powerfully.

Fifthly, He that doth the will of God for the manner of his Knowledg, shall know truths more fatisfyingly, to oversway all Objections that are made against him, and all discouragements that he meets with in the way of holiness. Saint Paul tells us how it was with him in this regard, Gal. 1. 15, 16, When it pleased God to reveal Jesus Christ in me. That phrase [in me] is very remarkable. A man may have Jesus Christ revealed to him, and yet not revealed in him; but when God revealed Christ in me, immediately I consulted not with flesh and blood; but this Knowledg did preponder and out-weigh all Objections that could be made against it. Another man that hath but a weak and feeble knowledg, it may be, he takes check at the ways of holines: and what says he? If I walk in a strict way, and am circumspect and careful in ordering my conversation, I shall be scorned, and opposed, and contemned; and these his Objections prevails with him. A man now, on the other fide, that is taught of God, is able to answer all these Objections, and to pass through good report, and ill report. This is the first thing, for Explication. SecondSecondly, By way of Explication, it may be demanded: But how comes it to pass that obedient Christians shall know more than others?

For answer to this, I shall give you these four

Reasons for it:

First, Because God hath promised the Holy Ghost to them that obey him, Acts 5. 31, 32, Him hath God exalsed with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins; and we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him : You must understand it aright. God doth not promise the Holy Ghost for our obedience, but in a way of obedience; now if God give his Spirit to them that obey him, then they shall have more knowledg, they shall know more of his will; for the Spirit of God is a Spirit of light, and opens our understanding. The Spirit of God is a teaching Spirit, and they that are taught by the Spirit of God, shall certainly come to Jesus Christ, John 6. 45, All thy children shall be taught of God; every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me, Ifa. 54. 13. - And the Spirit of God is a leading Spirit, The Spirit will lead you into all Truth; the Spirit will not only take you by the hand, but lead you in the way that you should walk in. As you lead your children when you teach them to go, fo the Spirit will lead you into all truth; that man to whom the Spirit of God is given, must certainly needs know more of the Mystery of Salvation.

Secondly, A second Reason is this, Because God hath made many Promises to the obedient : how many precious Promises have you in that one Scripture? Deut. 28, If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voyce of the Lordthy God, to observe and to do all his Commandements; then the Lord thy God will fet thee on high- above all the Nations of the Earth, and all these blessings (ball come upon thee: bleffed halt thou be in the City, and in the Field, and in the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and in the fruit of thy Cattel, and thy Kine, and the Flocks of thy Sheep; and blessed shall be thy basket, and thy store; bleffed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and when thou goest out, &c. There are bleffings of all forts promifed, and among others this is one: for faith our Saviour, To him that hath, shall be given; and it is twice repeated in one Evangelist, in Matth. 13. 12, and Matth. 25. 29, To him that hath, shall be given; he that well useth his Talent, shall have more Talents given to him.

Thirdly, Because God doth love to reward his Servants. Just as a Master deals with his Factor beyond the Seas, when he fees that he deals faithfully with him in smaller matters, he intrusts him with more of his Estate; fo when God sees us faithful in a little, he trusts us with more; when he fees us to use one talent well, he will give us five talents to trade with.

Fourthly, Because the more grace is acted, the more it grows and is encreased. Remarkable is that Scripture, Heb. 5. ult. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil; By reason of use have their spiritual senses exercised. Use legs, as we say, and have legs: the more a man fets about this Heavenly Employment of acting of grace, the more grace he shall have in his heart. Now .

Now for the Application of this Point, and first by way of Instruction: it serves to let you fee what is the reason of that truth which carnal men will hardly helieve, That Godly men are the only wife men, and that wicked men though they are never lo knowing, are errant fools: this is a truth plainly fet down in this Scripture: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, Prov. 9. 10. None are wise but those that fear the Lord : none are prudent in Gods account, but those that are obedient, those that practise what they know: practical Christians, are the only prudent Christians in Gods account. Remarkable is that Scripture, Dent. 4. 5, 6, Behold, I have taught you Statutes and Judgment's, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the Land whither ye go to poffes. Keep therefore and do them, for this is your wildom and understanding in the sight of the Nations, that shall hear these Statues, and fay, Surely this great Nation is a wife and understanding People. But now on the contrary, wicked men, let them have never fo much knowledg, let them have as much knowledg as the wicked Angels, who are knowing Spirits (the Devils are intelligent Spirits) if he do not put his knowledg into practife: if he be a wicked man, he is in Gods account an errant fool, he is but a very Sot: He is in darknels, and walketh in darknels, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because darkness hath blinded his eyes, 1 John 2. 11.

The fecond Use it is by way of Exhortation: and let it be a powerful perswasion to every one here present: and Oh that I could leave this Exhortation warm upon your hearts! Oh that I could put you upon the practise of what you have

Ee 2

heard:

heard: I beseech you, as ever you desire that Jefus Christ should take you by the hand, and kiss you with the kisses of his mouth, and manifest his love to you; as ever you defire that Jesus Christ should make fuller discoveries of himself to you, labour to practife what you know : live up to your light, do not foster or favour any known sin; nor bauk nor decline any known Duty; but live up to your light. Now that I may preis you to it,

consider,

First, We live in times of Libertinism and loofness, wherein many hold the truth in unrighteoufness: The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against them that imprison the Truth, that sin against the light of their knowledg and Conscience, that blow out the Candle, left it should discover truth to them: Light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, John 3. 19, And this is the condemnation to them with a witness, who shut the light out of their Souls: The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteou/ne/s, Rom. 1. 18. Let me set on this Consideration with this Motive.

First, Consider how little it is that we know of God: The very best of Gods Saints and Servants. how little do they know of him! To use Jobs phrase, Job 26. ult. How little a portion is heard of him! What a little knowledg is it, that the most knowing men have? There is a thousand times more excellency, and fulness, and sweetness, and Soul-fatisfa-Rion, and beauty, and all infficiency in God, in the Lord Jesus Christ, than ever yet was known or discovered; How little a portion do we know of God!

The

The greatest part of our knowledg, is the least part of our ignorance: we are ignorant of a thousand times more than we know. There are unfearch. able riches in Jesus Christ, as the Apostle calls them, Ephes. 3.8. There is a thousand times more riches in Christ than ever was discovered: Mines of Wisdom and Knowledg, that you were never yet acquainted with: now if you would know more, pra-

ctife what you do know.

Secondly, Consider, the more you know of God, the nearer do you come to Heaven; for the fulness of the Saints happiness in Heaven will be this, when they shall see God as he is, and know him as he is, I John 3. 2, Beloved now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Heaven confifts in the Beatifical Vision of God; a fight of God, seeing of him as he is in Heaven. David gives you a glimpse of Heaven in one Verse, Psalm 17. ult. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. Heaven consists in the Vision of God; in conformity to God, and in fatisfaction in God: this is Heaven. Vision of God, I will behold thy face in righteousness; Conformity to God, When I awake with thy likeness; Satisfaction in God, I shall be satisfied; then our Knowledg will be perfeeted.

Thirdly, Confider, that this experimental Knowledg that springs from Obedience, will make you found and folid Christians, that you shall not take up Religion upon trust: but you shall know upon what grounds you believe, upon what grounds you have the hope of eternal happiness:

you shall not have your Religion upon trust or Tradition: you shall have a certain evidence of your interest in Jesus Christ, and your hope of Eternal happiness; you shall be able to read your names written in Heaven. On the contrary, take away that experimental Knowledg that springs from Obedience: and a man may be a Turk upon the same ground that he is a Christian, because he takes his Religion upon trufts Take away this experimental Knowledg, a man may be of any Religion, as well as a Christian. O get this Knowledg that springs from Obedience, then you will know upon what grounds you take up Religion; and your hopes of Heaven and happiness will be

upon good grounds.

Fourthly, Confider, God looks upon all your Knowledg as nothing worth, unless you practife what you know, and live up to your light; God looks upon all your Praying, and Reading, and Hearing, and Com nunicating, as nothing, if so be you do not live up to what you know, Fer. 32. 23, And they came in and possessed it, but they obeyed not thy voyce, neither walked in thy Law: they have done nothing of all that thou commandeds them to do. What, had they done nothing that God commanded them to do? they had circumcifed their Children in obedience to Gods Command; they offered Sacrifices, they came to the Temple, they did many specious outward Duties: but faith the Prophet, They did nothing of all that God commanded them: Why? because they did not pra-Rife what they knew, their lives were not answerable to the profession they made; therefore God esteemed their profession, no profession; God esteemed their Sacrifices, no Sacrifices: take your

Sacrifices to your felves, Ezek. 20, Your new Moons, and your Sabbaths, and solemn Assemblies, I am weary of them, faith God; they are an abomination unto me. All their outward professions were nothing, because they did not practise what they knew. It is faid of the Sons of Eli, that they were Sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord, 1 Sam. 2.12. It may be thou mayit have a great deal of notional knowledg: thy tongue may be fo tip'd with Religion, that thousmayst be able to discourse upon Points of Religion very judiciously: thou mayst be able to give an account of thy Faith, thou mayst to able to answer an Argument, thou mayst be able to defend the Truth; yet, if so be thou doft not live according to thy knowledg, in Gods account still thou knowest nothing at all; God notwithstanding all thy Knowledg, looks upon thee but as an ignorant Sot: as it is faid of Ifrael, Jer. 4. 22, For my People are foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children; and have no under standing.

Again, Though thou mayst hear a thousand Sermons, if thou dost not frame thy life according to the Rule and Prescript of the Word of God, in Gods esteem thou art as one that never heard a Sermon in all thy life: and is not this a pitiful thing, that a man for want of practise shall lose all that he hath done: all his Prayers, and all his Hearing, and all his Communicating at the Lords Table? for an unpractical Christian in Gods account, hath done nothing at all; methinks this should work upon your hearts. If ever therefore you desire that God should look upon you, as upon his Children, that God should own you in a day

422 Obedienee to God, encreaseth, &c.

when you would give a whole World for a smile of his face; If ever you desire that Jesus Christ should give this testimony of you, Father, here are they that have kept thy Word; if ever you would have God to say to you, as he saith of some, These are my Children: then rest not in a bare notional profession of the Truth; but let Profession and Practice, Science and Conscience go together. This is the first Branch of the Doctrine, or the first Proposition, They that obey the will of God, shall know more of his Will.



JOHN VII. 17.

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.

Come now to the second Proposition, which is this:

He that doth the will of God, shall be more assured of what he knows.

This is that which our Saviour implies, when he faith, He Shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self; that is, he shall know it more certainly, know it more affuredly. To this agrees that speech of our Saviour, John 8. 23,32, If you continue in my Word, then are you my Disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Such an affured Knowledg had the Disciples , John 6. 69, And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God. It was not a conjectural knowledg, but a certain knowledg; fay they, We believe and are sure. And such a knowledg had Saint Paul, 2 Tim. 1. 12, I know whom I have believed, and I am perswaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day; He is able to keep my Soul, my SalSalvation, which he calls his Depositum, which he had deposited with God. For the better Explication of this Truth, That he that doth the will of God, shall be more assured of what he knows; it may be demanded, What is this certainty, or assurance of knowledg?

First, There are some things to be premised, or Cautions to be observed, for the finding out the

Nature of this fure and certain Knowledg.

Secondly, I will give you some distinctions of Knowledg, whereby you may see what it is I am speaking of.

Thirdly, I will then give you the Description

of this fure and certain Knowledg.

I. That you may know what this certainty of Knowledg is: there are some things to be premised, some Cautions for the finding out of this sure and certain Knowledg, and the Cautions are these live:

First, When I speak of sure and certain Know-ledg, I do not mean an assurance of Salvation, neither do I speak of the restect act of Knowledg, whereby we know that which we know, I John 2. 3, Hereby we know that we know; but I speak of that the Apostle calls the sull assurance of understanding, Col. 2. 2. When a man is so rooted, set-led, and established in the present truth, (Ephel. 4. 14. 2 Pet. 1. 12.) that he is not always doubting, imagining, hæsitating, and carried about with every wind of Dostrine.

The second Caution is this, When I speak of full assurance of understanding: you must remember, that there cannot be such a full assurance attained, that will be absolute and perfect: certainly, an absolute, perfect certainty of Knowledg,

cannot be attained in this life, that is, free from all doubting; for our knowledg in this life at the best is but imperfect; We know but in part, faith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 13. o. Althoughit be not absolutely perfect, yet it is fo strong that it will not be overswayed by the opinion of others, though they be very learned men; and this is that which the Apostle means in that Scripture, 1 Cor. 2. 15, The spiritual man judgeth all things, but he himself is judged of no man: That is, he is able to judg, and dilcern between Truth and Error, between Copper and Gold, between Food and Poison; he is able to discern Error from Truth; He himself is judged of no man; that is, he is so certainly affured of the truth that he holds, that the contrary judgment of others, though men of greater parts, and greater Scholars, shall not oversway him, or make him to stagger. It is true indeed, Thomas staggered a while at the Doctrine of the Resurrection, yet he recovered himself, and afterwards came to that certainty, that he cryed out, My Lord, and my God, John 22. 20. A man (for Example) may meet with some knots in Religion, some knotty Disputations, he may meet with some Objections that he doth not know how to answer: as Saint Austin said, That original sin was propagated to the Soul, I know it certainly: but how it is propagated, I cannot tell. A man may meet with some Objections that he cannot answer: however, he will not be overswayed so as to forsake the Truth, because he cannot answer some Objections.

Thirdly, When I speak of this full assurance of understanding or knowledg in the mysteries of our Salvation; this Caution likewise must be remembred, That though it is true, that God doth

426 What certainty of Knowledg is.

bestow it upon those that do his will, yet it is not gained only by doing the will of God, but it is gained especially by the gift of the Spirit of God. When Saint Peter made that excellent consession of Christ, when our Saviour asked his Disciples, But whom say ye that I am? he answered, and said, Thou art Christ the Son of the living God, (Matth. 16.15, 16, 17:) And Fesus answered and said unto bim, Blessed art thou Simon Bar Jona, for sless and blood bath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven. It is the Spirit of God that leads us into all Truth.

Fourthly, When I speak of a certainty of Knowledg: you must remember, that it is not a common gift of the Spirit of God, but it is a faving/gift of the Spirit of God: for fo faith our Saviour, Matth. 13. 11, 12, 13, To you it is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to others it is not given; far who soever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but who soever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath; therefore speak I to them in Parables, because they seeing, see not, and hearing, they heart not, neither do they understand. same certainty of Knowledg, therefore, is not attained by any natural qualification: it is not a Knowledg that can be gotten, or learned in Natures School: it is not gotten by Art or Industry, or reading of Books, neither is it gotten by Tradition. The Gentiles had a Natural knowledg of God, Rom. 1. 21, Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God. They knew God by a Natural light; but it is a Knowledg that is revealed by the Spirit of God; and therefore the Spirit of God is called the Spirit

of Wisdom, and Revelation, in the knowledg of bim;

Ephel. 1. 17.

Fifthly, Take this Caution, this affurance of Knowledg is gradual: that is, it hath different degrees: in some it is more, and in some it is less; fome are but Babes in Christ, others there are that are strong men: some are weak in the Faith, Rom. 14. 1. Others are rooted in Christ, and built up in him, and stablished in the Faith, Col. 2. 7. This certainty of understanding at the first is but very weak; as the Disciples of Christ in the great Point of the Resurrection, at the first they were not clear in their knowledg of it, Luke 24. 21, We trusted that it had been him which should have redeemed Israel; beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done; so that now our hope is almost at an end, in the great business of our Saviours Refurrection: they were not cleat at the first. A man that hath this certainty of Knowledg, may have but a weak beginning at the first, and yet notwithstanding it will encrease more and more: like the morning light, that shines more and more to the perfect day, Prov. 4. 18. So that a man will at last come to be grounded, and stablished in the truth; he will be stedfast, and unmovable, abounding in the work of the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. ult. He will be stablished in Christ, and grow in grace, and in the knowledg of our Lord and Savour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 3. ult.

Secondly, Let me give you some Distinctions of Knowledg, that you may be the better able to find it out. Knowledg you must know is twofold: there is a Natural, and a Supernatural Knowledg. First, Natural Knowledg which is ingraven in the Soul of man by Nature, as the Gentiles by Na-

ture knew God, Rom. 1. 21. That is a Natural knowledg that is gotten by Art, and Industry, as

the knowledg of Astronomy is, and the like.

Secondly, supernatural Knowledg, that is revealed by the Spirit of God. Now the Supernatural Knowledg is twofold: - First, It is either common: - Or fecondly, It is faving. There is a common Supernatural Knowledg, that is common to the Reprobates, as well as to the Elect; for Reprobates who fin the fin against the Holy Ghost, they are enlightned with a Supernatural light. Every thing that is Supernatural, is not Spiritual; the Devils they have a Supernatural light, and yet it is not a spiritual, nor fanctifying light; and therefore they that fin the fin against the Holy Ghost, have common light, which is Supernatural; the Text faith, They have received the knowledg of the truth, Heb. 10.26.

Secondly, There is a faving Supernatural light; viz. that which is infused into the Souls of the Regenerate, by the faving work of Gods holy Spirit. Now this supernatural saving light, that is again twofold.

First, It is either mediate, that is, that which is acquired by means: as Reading, Hearing, and Praying, waiting upon God in the use of his Ordinances, according as God told Saint Paul in the preaching of the Word, Mens eyes should be opened, and they should be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, Acts 26. 18.

Secondly, Or else it is immediate: and this is that light which is darted into the Soul without the use of means. Saint Paul (for example) he

w as enlightned miraculously by a Revelation from Heaven, Alts 9. And fo in the Conversion of the Jaylor, how wonderfully was he enlightned on a fudden! Asts 16. And the Conversion of the Thief on the Crofs, it was done immediately by the Spirit of God. Now when I am speaking of this certainty of Knowledg, I speak not of a Natural, but of a Spiritual Knowledg; neither do I fpeak of a common Supernatural Knowledg, but of the fanctifying and faving gift of the Spirit of God; neither do I speak of the immediate, without the means; but I speak of the mediate in the use of means; therefore to come to the third thing, that is, to give you the Description of this certain and affured Knowledg: and the Description is this.

Certainty of Spiritual Knowledg, it is a faving work of the Spirit of God, whereby a Believer receives fatisfying light, and doth give up his understanding resolvedly to those Truths that are revealed to him. There are these five things to be

noted in this Description.

First, I say it is a saving work of the Spirit of God. It is not the knowledg of Devils; the Devils have a Supernatural Knowledg; neither is it the knowledg of Hypocrites, such a knowledg as they that sin the sin against the Hely Ghost may have: but it is that Knowledg that is darted into the Soul by the Hely Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2.9, 10, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. The Apostle speaks it of the Kingdom of Grace, as well as of the Kingdom of Glory; Man doth not know the work of the Spirit of Grace upon the heart:

but faith he in the words following, God hath rewealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, year he deep things of God. And it is the Spirit of God, that is faid to guide sus into all truth, John 16. 13. That is the first thing in the Description, it is a faving work of the Spirit of God.

Secondly, It is a Knowledg whereby a Believer

hath received fatisfying light.

First, A Believer hath received light. The truth is, none doth know the Truth aright, but he that believes it; therefore believing and knowing the Truth, are joyned together: 1 Tim. 4. 3, Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving, of them which believe, and know the Truth.

Thirdly, I note this, whereby a Believer receiving fatisfying light; But what is that light (may) he, some of you will say) that may be called satisfying light?

I antwer, and shall give you an account of it in

these five particulars:

First, That is a satisfying Light, that is joyned with a powerful Conviction upon the Conscience, when the Spirit of God doth convince us of sin, and of Righteousness, and Judgment, John 16.8. That is a fatisfying Light, when the Spirit of God breaks in upon the Soul with fuch an irreliftible Light, that a man cannot gainfay it, or withstand it; for example, When the Sun is rifen in the morning, a man then knows it is day: and if a thouland should fay to the contrary, he would fay, I know it is day. Such is the light of the Spirit of God; it is an irrefiftible light, it breaks in upon the

heart

heart with that power, that the heart cannot gain-

fay it.

Secondly, That is a satisfying Light, which settles and stablisheth a man in the present Truth, that he will not be removed from it: When a man is rooted in the Faith, setled and stablished in Jesus Christ, then he hath received a satisfying

Light.

Thirdly, That is a fatisfying Light, when a man can act Faith upon that light he hath received; and make bold adventures for the Truth that he hath embraced, when he can act Faith upon it; so did those three Worthies in Daniel. 3.17: they had received such satisfying Light, that God was the true God, and his Worship the true Worship, that they ventured a Furnace for it; say they, If it be so, Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning siery Furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O King; but if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy Golden Image which thou hast set up.

Fourthly, That is a satisfying Light, which will enable a man to discern between Truth and salfe-hood: though Errour be masked with never such fair pretences, yet notwithstanding a man shall be able to discover that Errour, and abhor it: and though Truth be eclipsed with never so many salfe Glosses, and Interpretations, and never so much opposed: yet a man can discern it, and close with

it, and cleave to it.

Fifthly, This is a satisfying Light, that will enable a man to reconcile some seeming differences that are in the Scriptures. Let me give you an instance in one or two: those two places compared

F f

together, Gen. 6. 6, And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the Earth, and it grieved him at his heart; but in Numb. 23. 19, it is faid, God is not as man that he should lye, neither the Son of man that he should repent. Now a man that hath this fatisfying Light, he knows how to reconcile these two places thus: Repentance in God, is not a change of his Will, but of his Work; God is faid to repent after the manner of men, because he doth those things that man doth, when he repents. Let me give you another instance : Saint Paul tells us. Rom. 3.28, Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by Faith, without the deeds of the Law: But Saint James he tells the quite contrary, James 2.25, Te see then, how by Works a man is justified. and not by Faith only. Now a man that hath fatiffying Light, he reconciles these two thus : Saint Paul he speaks of justification before God; and Saint James he speaks of Justification before men: We are justified before God by Faith only, we are justified before men by works. Again, they may be reconciled thus: Faith doth justifie our Perfons, but good works doth juffife our Faith; Good works are no part of our Justification, but only a proof of our Justification.

Lastly, In the Description I say this: A Believer having received a satisfying Light, gives up his understanding resolvedly to those Truths that are revealed to him. But you will say, When doth a man give up his understanding resolvedly to those

Truths revealed to him? I will tell you,

First, When he is resolved to part with every fin that the Word of God disallows and condemns, though it be as dear to him as his right hand, or his right eye; and when he can practice every Duty

Duty that the Word of God commands, though it be never to difficult. As for Example, the duty of Mortificatiou, and Self-denyal, and contempt of the World, when he can purifie his heart by believing, and obeying the Truth, 1 Pet. 1. 22, Seeing you have purified your Souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit. And it is faid of many of the Priests, that they were obedient to the Faith, Acts 6.7. And St. Paul faid, Acts 26.19: that he was not disobedient to the Heavenly Vision.

Secondly, A man gives up his understanding refolvedly to the truth, when he can plead for the truth, and not plead against it. Saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 13. 8, For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. Doctor Taylor the Martyr in Queen Maries days, he laid down his life for this truth, That it was lawful for Ministers to marry; I know (faid he) that it is not a fundamental truth; but because I know it is the truth of God, rather than I will part with any truth, I will part with my life. So then, when a man can thus refolvedly give up his understanding to the truth, that he will part with his life rather than part with the truth, then hath he attained to this certainty of Knowledg indeed. And thus you fee the Description of it, and have the Point opened: now let me make Application of it.

Ule 1. If this be a certain truth, That they that do the Will of God, shall not only know more of Gods Will, but they shall know it more assuredly: they shall be sure of what they know, and shall attain to this certainty of Knowledg that I have been speaking of: then it serves to let us see what is the reafon of all the Errours that are broached, and for greedily drunk in, in these days in which we live; what

Ff 2

what is the reason of that uncertainty, and unconstancy that is in Religion; that men are giddyheaded, turned with every wind of Doctrine and new Opinion; and fuck in fuch strange and corrupt Doctrines, and that there is fo many Sects and Schisins: the reason is, because men never attained to this full affurance of Understanding, this certainty of Knowledg that the Text speaks of: If any man will do his will, he shall know of the Do-Etrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my felf. All the knowledg that they have of the Scripture, it may be it is but an Opinion, or a conjecture, or a guess, a notional knowledg, a knowledg that is taken up upon tradition, or trut, not that they have any affurance of it in their own hearts and understandings: All the knowledg of Scepticks, those that you call Seekers, Nullifidians, that believe nothing, all whose profession is to profess nothing, all their knowledg is but a meer Opinion; the truth is, they have no knowledg at all; If they did know the truth, the truth would make them free; If they had known the truth, they would have been rooted, and fetled, and established in it: they would part with their lives, rather than part with the truth.

A second Lesson you may learn hence, is this: It lets us see what the reason is of all that Atheism and loosness, and libertinism that is in the hearts of men, and practises of men at this day; the reason is, because they never attained to any certainty of knowledg in the Doctrine of Christ, and Mysteries of Religion: they never did believe the Precepts and Promises, nor Threatnings of God cordially: For Example, Did men but believe the threatnings of the Word; to name two or three:

When

When God faith, Upon the wicked he will rain mares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest, this (hall be the portion of their Cup, Pfalm 11.6. Again, when God faith, that he will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses, Plalm c8.21. And God faith expressly, that no unrighteous perfon shall inherit the Kingdom of God: neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, Shall inherit the Kingdom of God, I Cor. 6. 9, 10. And that Text faith expresly, That the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and Murderers, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all lyars, shall have their part in the Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, Rev. 21. 8. Did men but know these truths, were they but affured of them, durst they do as they do? durst they venture their immortal Souls, that must fink or fwim for ever, that are capable of endless blifs, or endless, remidiless misery in Hell, more days than there are drops of water in the whole Ocean? Durst they venture their precious Souls for the fatisfying of every base lust, as they do? No, they durst not. Men do not know these truths: and because they do not know them, therefore it is that they do not believe them; and because they do not know and believe them, therefore there is in them an evil heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God. The first step of the Souls departure from God, is by unbelief: so the first step of the Souls approach to God, is by Faith; Unbelief is the cause of all other fins. A man that doth not believe the Promises of God to embrace them, nor the Ff 2 Threat-

Threatnings of God to fear them, nor the Precepts of God to obey them: when he departs from God by unbelief, he departs to other fins, and still departs further and further: fo that the breach between God and the Soul, is never made up again: but such a man departs from God step by step, until at last he comes to hear that Thunder-striking fentence, Depart ye cursedinto everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

A fecond Use is by way of Examination: and I beseech you, my Brethren, to call your selves to an account, and examine whether you have this certainty of understanding, this assured Knowledg that I have discoursed of. May be you will say to me, But how shall we know whether we have it, or no? Aufw. I will tell you how you may know it, these

three ways:

First, By the names or expressions that the Spirit of God gives it.

Secondly, By the Properties of it.

Thirdly, By the Effects of it.

First, You may know it by the names or Expresfions that the Spirit of God gives it; fuch Expreffions as these now:

First, It is called a Knowledg of those things which are most furely believed, Luke 1.1: Not barely believed, but certainly believed.

A second Expression is, a being taught of God, John 6. 45, And they shall be all taught of God.

Thirdly, It is known by this Expression, by writing the Law of God in our hearts, upon the Tables of our hearts, Jer. 31. 33. Heb. 8. 10.

Fourthly, By this Expression, by receiving the anointing that teacheth you all things, I Joh. 2.27, But the ancinting which ye have received of him,

abid-

abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth.

Fifthly, It is known by this expression, By having the mind of Christ; or knowing the mind of

Christ, 1 Cor. 2. ult.

Sixthly, It is known by this expression, by bringing high thoughts into the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10. 5. When there is such a light in a man, that it can answer those Objections that are made against the truth: when it can likewise so stifle those reasonings and cavils of his back-sliding heart, that none of them shall be able to beat down the truth, but he shall be able to stick to the truth notwithstanding; such a man hath this certainty of Knowledg.

Lastly, It is known by this expression, the manifestation of the Spirit, 1 Cor. 12.2, But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to prosit

withal.

Secondly, This certainty of knowledg may be known by the Properties of it, I shall name but

these four Properties:

First, This assuring Knowledg is ever an heart-humbling knowledg. Carnal knowledg, natural knowledg, unsanctifyed knowledg pusss a man up, it makes him like a pair of Bellows, as the word ovoio, in the Original signifies, 1 Cor. 8. 1: but this assuring Knowledg, it ever makes a man base and humble in his own eyes: the more you know of God, and of the truths of God, and of your own selves, the more vile and base you will be in your own eyes: I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes, Job 42.5,6.

F f 4

Secondly, This Knowledg is a reflective knowledg: it makes a man turn in upon his own heart, it makes a man to be wife for himfelf, Prov. o. 12. If thou be wife, thou shalt be wife for thy felf. There is many a man that knoweth how to teach others, but yet he cannot teach himself, Job 5. 27, Lo this, we have fearched it, foit is, hear it, and know thou it for thy good: In the Hebrew it is, Hear and know

it for thy self.

Thirdly, This affured Knowledg is an experimental knowledg: for it will make a man read fome Sculpture or ingraving of the Spirit of God upon his own heart, that his heart will be Christs Epistle, written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, 2 Cor. 3. 3. The truth is, my Brethren (and I would have you to remember it) that all the truths of God to a carnal and unregenerate man, are Mysteries. No man (for example) knows what Repentance is, but the repenting Sinner; no man I nows what Faith is , but the true Believer ; no man knows what Regeneration is, but he that is regenerate; no man knows what Union with Christis, but he that is united to Christ; no man knows what it is to have Communion with Christ in his Life, and Death, and Refurrection, and Graces, and Comforts, but he that hath felt them in his own heart; no man knows it favingly, until le knows it experimentally. A fick man doth better know what his disease is, than all the Physicians in the World, because he feels it. A blind man may talk of Colours, that never faw them. A hungry man may talk of a rich Banquet, that he never tafted of: But now this is fure knowledg, it is an experimental knowledg.

Fourthly, It is a heart-warming knowledg: other ther knowledg, a notional knowledg, is but like the light of the Moon: it enlightens indeed in a dark night, but it doth not warm. But now this affured Knowledg is like the light of the Sun: it doth not only enlighten you, but it hears and warms your hearts, it will make you in love with Jesus Christ, and to long for more Communion with him in Grace here, and in Glory hereafter.

Thirdly, You may know this certainty of Knowledg by the Effects of it, and I shall name but these

two:

First, This affured Knowledg will make you to hold fatt the Name of God, notwithstanding all the opposition that you meet with: it will make you flick to the Truths of God, Pfalm 119.31, 1 bave fluck unto thy Testimonies, O Lord, put me not to Chame. In Rev. 2.13. God ipeaks to the Church of Pergamus, Thou holdest fast my Name, and hast not denyed my Faith, even in those days where Anti. pas was my faithful Martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth: Thou haft kept my

Name there, in the midft of opposition.

Secondly, It will make a man run any hazard rather than part with the Truth. See the courage of Saint Paul, Acts 20.24, The Holy Ghoft witneffeth in every City, Saying, Bonds and afflictions abide me; but none of thesetbings move me, neither count I my life dear unto my felf, so I may finish my course with joy. The truth is, a little light, if it be fpiritual, will make a man to refift temptations, that the allurements of the Flesh, and the World, and the Devil shall not biass him, and carry him away. On the contrary, a great light, if it be not ipiritual, will yield to every temptation: and hence it is, that fometimes you fee a man of weak parts stand out in

an hour of temptation and tryal, when a man of strong and great parts (if he wants this spiritual Light) falls fouly and fearfully. A man that hath once got this assured knowledg of the Truth, he will say, I will lay down my life, rather than I will part with the truth: another man that hath not received this Light, how will he shift, and shuffle, and temporize, and part with the truth, and swim with every stream, and sail with every wind! How will he be a double-minded man in all his ways: and will be carried about with every wind of Do-trine!

of Exhortation: I beseech you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you would labour for this full assurance of Understanding: that you would be rooted, and setled, and established in the truth: get a setled understanding. Now to press you to

this, let me use but these two Motives :

The first is this; The truth is, there is no proper Knowledg where this certainty is wanting, it is at the best else, but matter of conjecture. See an instance in Saint Paul, before he had this spiritual Light, in Acts 26. 9, I verily thought with my felf, that I ought to do many things against Jesus of Nazareth. It was but his thought and conjecture: whereas when a man hath once gotten this certainty of Knowledg, then he understands the Scriptures indeed, Luke 24. 45, Then opened he their under standings, that they might under stand the Scriptures. And you may observe in the Parable of the Sower, and the four Grounds, three whereof were naught, and one good: of the three first it is not faid, that they received the Word with understanding, but only the fourth Ground heard the Word.

Word, and received it with understanding, Matth.

13. 23.

A fecond Motive is this, it will be of fingular use to you in erroneous and backsliding times: it will be of fingular advantage to your poor Souls, when you shall have that Knowledg, that you can difcern Truth from Error; and Gold from Copper, and Food from Poylon, Our Saviour here in the Text speaks of it as the Priviledg of a Believer, or obedient Christian, that he shall be able to discern true Doctrine from falle. Certainly, in such times as we live in, wherein the Name of God is fo much blasphemed, and the Truth is eclipsed, and the Sun of the Gospel is so much darkned by those fogs and mists of Error: it is a fingular Priviledg for a man to have a fetled knowledg in the Truth, that he may not be carried about with every wind of Doctrine. But it may be you will fay, What course must we take to get this certainty of knowledg? I shall tell you that in three words:

First, If ever you desire to have this sull assurance of Knowledg, you must resolve to walk humbly with your God, Pfalm 25.0, The meek will be guide in Judgment, and the humble will be

teach his way.

Secondly, Strive to be growing Christians. That is an excellent Scripture, Hosea 6. 3, Then shall we

know, if we follow on to know the Lord.

Thirdly, If you would get this full affurance of Understanding, I cannot give you a better direction than the Text gives you, which our Saviour here prescribes you; do but the Will of God, that is, practice what you know, and you shall know more: and you shall know in a better manner, and know more assuredly than you do. I conclude with

1442 What certainty of Knowledg is.

an excellent Speech of a Reverend Divine that is now with God; Men, in matters of Religion, do therefore become Scepticks, because they are not Practicks: that is, men are ever doubting of Truth; they will be Seekers, Nullifidians, they will believe nothing, because they do not practice what they know. It is the practical Christian that shall know much of God: that shall have the mind of God made known to him, shall have more of the incomes of the Spirit of God; whereas, if you will not be practical Christians, you shall be always floating, and wavering, and double-minded, and ready to be seduced, and led into by paths of Error, which will endanger the Salvation of your immortal Souls. The Lord help us to practice those Truths that we know, that he may delight in us, and do us good, and lead our feet in the way of life.

FINIS.

Books printed for, and fold by Dorman Newman, at the Kings Arms in the Poultrey.

Golden Key to open hidden Treasures, or several great points that refer to the Saints Blessedness and future happiness, with the resolution of several important Questions: the active and passive Obedience of Christ, vindicated and proved. Eleven serious singular Pleas, which all sincere Christians may fasely make to those ten Scriptures which speak of the general Judgment, and the particular Judgment that most certainly must pass on all, &c.

The works of Mr. James Janeway, containing these six following Treatises, Heaven on Earth, or the best friend in the worst of times: Death unstung, being a Sermon preached at the Funeral of Mr. Thomas Moseley an Apothecary, with a Narrative of his Life and Death; also the manner of Gods dealing with him before and after his Con-

version.

A Sermon preached at the Funeral of Thomas

Savage.

Invisible Realities, demonstrated in the holy Life and triumphant Death of Mr. John Janeway.

The Saints encouragement to Diligence in Christs
Services.

Service, with Motives and means to Christian activity: His last Legacy to his Friends, containing 27 Sermons, instances of Gods Providences in and about several dangers and deliverances, with the names of several who were Eye witnesses to several of them: Whereunto is added a Sermon on the same Subject.

Mr. Wadsworth's last Legacy; being a serious Exhortation to an Holy Life, or a Plea for the absolute necessity of Inherent Righteousness, in those that hope to be saved: with an Elegy on that

Author's death.

Mr. Caryl's Exposition on the Book of Job.

Gospel Remission, or a Treatise shewing that true Blessedness consists in the pardoning of sin;

by Jeremy Burroughs.

Mount Pissah, or a Prospect of Heaven, being an Exposition of the 4th Chapter of the 2d Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, by Thomas Case.

The retired mans Meditations, or the Mysterie and power of Godliness, presenting to view the richness and sulness of Christs person as the Mediator, or the Spiritual and Natural man in their proper distinctions, &c. by Sir Henry Vane, Knight.

The Saints Triumph over the last Enemy; in a Sermon preached at the Funeral of that zealous and painful Minister of Christ Mr. James Jane-

way; by Nathaniel Vincent.

A Collection of Sermons, preach'd at the Morning-Lecture in Southwark and elsewhere, by N. Blakie.

The Morning-Seeker, shewing the benefit of being good betimes, with directions of making

fure work about early Religion; by John Ry-

A Discourse of Evangelical Love, Church-peace and Unity, with the occasions and reasons of present differences and divisions about things Sacred

and Religious : by John Owen, D. D.

Saints Memorials, being a Collection of Divine Sayings written and delivered by the late Reverend and Eminent Ministers of the Gospel, Mr, Edm. Calamy, Mr. Joseph Caryl, Mr. R. Venning, Mr. James Janeway, &c.

Heaven realized, being some of the Experiences

of a famous Christian Gentlewoman.

The Christians greatest Interest, or a tryal of a Saving-interest in Christ, the way how to attain

it: by W. Guthry, late Minister in Scotland.

The Weavers Pocket-Book, or Weaving Spiritualized, in a Discourse, wherein men employed in that Occupation may be instructed how to raise heavenly Meditations from the several parts of their work: by J Collins, D. D.

A Call to Prayer, in two Sermon on that Subject lately preached to a Countrey Auditory, with an account of the Principles and practice of the Qua-

kers in the matter of Prayer.

The Life and Death of the godly Man, exemplified in a Sermon preached at the Funeral of that Pious and faithful Minister of Christ Mr. Thomas

Wadsworth, by R. Bragg.

The History of the Wars in New England, with an account of the several fights between the Joint-Forces of the United English Collonies, and the Indians.

A Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments, with a Resolution of several Momentous Questions, and Cases of Conscience: by Mr. James Durham, late Minister at Glasgow.

The Memorial of Gods Judgments Spiritual and Temporal, in some Sermons of Mr. Nicholas Lockier

Minister of the Gospel.

Godly fear, or the Nature and Necessity of fear, and its usefulness, both to the driving Sinners to Christ, and to the provoking Christians on in a godly Life through the several parts and duties of it, till they come to Blessedness: by R. A. Author of Vinditia Pietatis.

